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The Modern English Novel, by Wilbur L. Cross, on page 122

The Saturday Review of Literature

EDITED BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

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The New York Tempo

TO one returning from an older country, a more relaxing climate, a land of somewhat more leisurely ways, the first sight at night of the scintillating and castellated cluster of towers on the tip of Manhattan Island is both an exhilaration and a baleful portent. To one traveller the fabulous vision faded, with gazing, into a reminder of some vast engine room, some cage and temple of terrific dynamos. Cliff on cliff of blind dragon eyes blankly watching, but the aura of light of the welcoming city continually trembling with vibrance incessant by night as by day. And once the streets are trod again on leaving the steamer, how the old remembered underhum of unsleeping industry rises to the ear. One returns from other shores in the autumn, when, if one is fortunate, the crisp air of the next sparkling morning, the crystalline mediterranean of the sky, the furbishing gold of bright sunlight make a stroll down principal thoroughfares impossible. One's pace imperceptibly quickens. People are "stepping out" all about one. Whistle or song rise to the lips—barbaric visions flutter before the eyes. The money-millennium is once again just around the corner. Golden opportunity is only a block or two beyond. The snare of the city displays from every cliff and battlement its thousand lures, the world is once more all affluent shop windows, marvelous merchandise set forth for one's own particular benefit. In a year now—by virtue of a little office apparatus, a little hurry and scurry, propositions put up to a few of the right people, one may retire a millionaire.

To the young writer the large city has always talked in these terms, most notably this our own Babylon of merchandise. Here is the stuff of life, the material for all fictions, and here—above all—is the immediate market (nay, a thousand immediate markets!) for all sorts and conditions of literary wares. "Begin—begin—begin!" shouts the exhilarating morning. "Work fast, young one,—this is the City of Fast Workers. But work fast, work hard, and very soon—oh, very soon!—your name also will be in the magazines, up on the billboards, in lights over Broadway. Money is easy!"

The veteran writer's mind rings with this inaudible but vibrant ballyhoo, as he gazes around him—home again at last from quieter places. And then his mind turns to the hundreds of various writers he has seen and known, to the long, hard, essentially lonely toil of the best of them somewhere out of this hubbub, away from this false counsel, utterly removed from this distracting glamour. For, whether one must live with the city or may live out of it, that is, after all, the way most actual literature comes into being. The New York tempo must be forgotten. It is a call to big salesmanship that may be excellent for the merchants, but can only eventually mislead, bog down, and quite bewilder the creative imagination. Stimulating? Yes, New York is stimulating to the artist. But its stimulation is so incessant that the fine cutting edge it first gives to the faculties soon wears down. To live with it, the true artist must retire into his memory, creep into some secret cranny of the mammoth walls to shut himself up alone with the work he has planned. The first spiritual cocktail New York offers to the imagination has, certainly, a "kick." But the sight and sound of the great city keeps on declaring dividends on that cocktail all day. Stupor results to the thinking mind. For the large project, for the marshalling of one's greatest powers of imagination, retreat from the sideshow-cries of all these shouting towers, from the engine-racket of the streets all running nowhere so fast—that is the seriously-committed writer's only salvation.

Portrait

By EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY

OVER and over I have heard,
As now I hear it,
Your voice harsh and light as the scratching
of dry leaves over the hard ground,
Your voice forever assailed and shaken by the wind
from the island
Of illustrious living and dead, that never dies down,
And bending at moments under the terrible weight
of the perfect word,
Here in this room without fire, without comfort of
any kind,
Reading aloud to me immortal page after page conceived in a mortal mind.
Beauty at such moments before me like a wild
bright bird
Has been in the room, has eyed me, and let me come
near it.

I could not ever nor can I to this day
Acquaint you with the triumph and the sweet rest
These hours have brought to me and always bring,
Rapture, colored like the wild bird's neck and wing,
Comfort, softer than the feathers of its breast.

Always, and even now, when I rise to go,
Your eyes blaze from a face gone wickedly pale;
I try to tell you what I would have you know,
What peace it was; you cry me down; you scourge
me with a salty flail;
You will not have it so.

This Week

"The Fall of the Russian Empire."
A Review.

"King Akhnaton."
Reviewed by *Elmer Davis.*

"All Kneeling."
Reviewed by *Herschel Brickell.*

"Day of Fortune."
Reviewed by *J. Dana Tasker.*

"Cowboy."
Reviewed by *Edwin L. Sabin.*

The Folder.
By *Christopher Morley.*

"Bunker Hill."
Reviewed by *John G. Fitzpatrick.*

Next Week, or Later

American Foreign Policy.
By *Edwin Borchard.*

The True Adventurer

By VILHALMUR STEFANSSON

IN his "Flying the Arctic,"* as in everything else he has done, Wilkins is the true adventurer, concerned always with the inner glory of the deed and taking only second thought for the fame or profit that may come from it. Even in these later days of advertising, he employs no publicity agent to inform the world what a romantically engaging figure he is and to build up interest and public suspense by press releases telling that now he is preparing to fly, to-morrow he may fly, yesterday he would have flown except for so and so, and now he is off, his life in his hands—or, rather, in one hand, the other tapping out thrilling paragraphs to the receptive newspapers.

Wilkins carries the radio with him reluctantly and sends over it brief messages telling not that he is in danger, but that now he is safe. On his most spectacular flight these messages were listened for only by a school teacher at a Government outpost on the north tip of Alaska who had no sending apparatus and who reported by letter to the outside world, months afterwards, that he had received messages from Wilkins and Eielson till they were 1,700 miles away on the first airplane flight of history across the Arctic from America to Europe.

* * *

The world knew nothing of that flight until nearly a week after it was over. Those who understood what it meant, like Amundsen, then gave out press statements that it had been the most romantic, the most daring, and commercially the most important flight in the history of aviation. They said that for brilliance of plan, for detailed perfection of the execution, it had never been equalled. Colonel Amery, Minister for the Colonies in Great Britain, former Lord of the Admiralty, author and student of the history of exploration, said that "Not since Balboa stood on a peak in Darien and saw for the first time the broad Pacific, has so significant a new view of the world been spread before human eyes in one day as when Wilkins and Eielson flew in twenty-two hours across the unexplored Arctic ocean from America to Europe."

But the newspaper readers had not been prepared for the adventure by the arts of publicity. There had been no thrills of anticipation, no quivers of suspense. And so they merely asked with mild interest: "Who is Wilkins?" and usually forgot they had asked the question before they had discovered anyone who knew the answer, having meantime turned with restful satisfaction to better press-agented heroes who were doing commoner things.

For it is annoying more than anything else to be called upon suddenly to admire a man you never heard of for doing something you had never speculated on because you supposed nobody could do it.

* * *

Wilkins may be the perfect adventurer in that the deed for him has always been its own sufficient reward, but in this era of the press agent it is really a weakness in him that he has such a contempt for publicity. He would find it easier to gain needed support for his startling, but sound plans if he could only steer the happy middle course of the Arabian Lawrence, for instance, who damns press and public in a loud voice and then goes off to do the very things a press agent would advise him to do if he had such a genius for publicity as no press agent

* FLYING THE ARCTIC By CAPTAIN GEORGE HUBERT WILKINS. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1928. $4.50.

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yet has had except Lawrence. The happy warrior, nowadays, is the Lord Roberts who contrives to let everybody know how modest he is and thus sets the Kiplings chanting that he doesn't advertise, does he, Bobs? The modesty of his principal is the trump card of the fame promoter. But not the Wilkins sort of modesty. It is too fierce and aggressive. Moreover, he is too restive, never feeling he can spare the time to stand fidgeting modestly in the spotlight long enough for the public to learn to know and love him.

* * *

This man, still young, has walked in romance since childhood. I know about that, for I happen to have traveled in South Australia where he was brought up on the fringe of the tropics, I know his mother and brothers, and he and I were together three years on an Arctic expedition under conditions when even a sphinx like Wilkins occasionally talks.

Thus from the tropics came the man destined to be at home in the Arctic, familiar with its inner secrets. But he did not come north direct. First, after graduating from a school of engineering, he joined the then infant profession of movie camera men and specialized in the most dangerous work, in parachute drops from balloons before there were planes, in crawling over the wings of airplanes later when that was more dangerous than now. He was born not merely brave, as the War proved every other citizen of every country to be, but cool and efficient, however strange or perilous the circumstances. So it was merely natural that when the war in the Balkans flared out, he went to the front and secured the first authentic pictures of hand-to-hand fighting that were ever exhibited in movie theatres. There had been pictures before, but they had most or all of them been more or less faked.

From that war he sailed for the tropics, and thence he came north to join my third expedition and to be the first professional moving picture photographer that ever went on an Arctic expedition. He incidentally showed the first movies to an audience of Arctic Eskimos. This was on Christmas , 1913, at Collinson Point, Alaska.

* * *

In a review of Captain Wilkins's own book, I cannot afford to repeat what I have told about him in a book of mine called "The Friendly Arctic," which is the narrative of an expedition that lasted more than five years. In cold and storm, in mutiny, in every difficulty he stood by, and at a critical point he changed the course of that expedition from failure to success. In three and a half years he absorbed there, too, that understanding of northern conditions which has made his later flying work so profoundly different from that of any of the others. He came there to the firm conviction that the ice-floes, drifting over the ocean far from land, are dotted everywhere with good landing places for airplanes, though other fliers have supposed them to be so rough as to offer no landings at all; he learned that there is an abundance of seals under the ice even in places where you might travel a year without seeing a sign of any, and he acquired the technique for detecting and capturing them, so that he could say with confidence, as he now does in his "Flying the Arctic," that if he were ever forced to land near the center of the Arctic and were unable to take off again, he could walk ashore to some land inhabited either by Eskimos or whites and would suffer neither hunger or other great hardship in doing it, even if the journey required two years. Other fliers either disbelieved in life beneath the Arctic ice, or else believed, but did not know the technique for discovering and securing the food animals. They were therefore more heavily loaded when they flew with rations for six weeks or twelve (at the end of which they would starve) than Wilkins was with the two weeks' supplies and the hunting gear which would thereafter supply him with food, fuel, and clothing for years.

But never fear that just because Wilkins was equipped with this knowledge, and considers the Arctic the safest place in the world to fly, that his book is therefore devoid of thrills or that the experiences were tame, even to him.

Things never grow tame to Wilkins. Flying still thrills him, though he is one of the most experienced of flyers. He is only forty, but he has been flying eighteen years. For two years of that time he flew over the battle lines in France till he had earned from the Commander in Chief of the Australian forces the praise that if he had to choose from the whole of that fine army the one man who was at once the most courageous, competent, and useful, he would have to choose Wilkins. He flew in the first airplane race from England to Australia and smashed his plane in the mountains of Crete when his oil leaked out and forced him down. He had had many a narrow escape from death in many countries both in peace and war—in Turkey, in Russia, and with us in the Arctic. But even so, do you think it can have seemed tame when in March, 1927, Wilkins and his true comrade in adventure, the American, Ben Eielson, found themselves flying a mile high over the unexplored Arctic sea and with such a wind in their teeth that it was practically certain their fuel would give out before they reached land? It was dark with the combined obscurity of night and a snowstorm. According to their own belief there was below them on the average one safe landing spot every five miles, while all the rest was about as smoothly level as a city of brick houses that has just been shaken into ruin by an earthquake. The one good spot every five miles or so of this chaos you could pick out from above on a clear day but not in a storm. Now it was both night and a blizzard.

* * *

The plane was, then, a mile high in thick clouds two hours after sunset, eighty miles from land, over an ocean 6,000 feet deep, when their gasoline failed them. Wilkins tells the story on page 149 of his straightforward narrative.

> My watch was before me beside the compass. At 9:02 the engine cut out suddenly, as if the switch had been snapped. There was no splutter or gasp because of starved carburetor, but a sudden silence, except for the hum of the wind in the wires.
>
> Eielson snapped the switch right and left; there was no response from the engine. We could feel the sag of the falling plane. With great coolness and skill Eielson steadied the machine, righting her to an even keel and an easy glide. His eyes were glued to the turn and bank indicator. My hands were ready to guide and keep the compass course. As we came within a few hundred feet of the ground the horizon neared and we could dimly see it serrated with ice ridges, but they gave us no idea of the height or distance.
>
> Near the ground the air was rough. The plane swerved and pitched, but Eielson—still calm and cool—corrected with controls each unsteady move. In a moment we were in the snowdrift. We could not see beyond the windows of the plane. I felt Eielson brace himself against the empty gas tank; I leaned with my back against the partition wall of the cabin and waited. The left wing and the skis struck simultaneously. We bounced and alighted as smoothly as if on the best prepared landing field. I gripped Eielson's shoulder and slipped through the door of the machine to the ice. Wind and driving snow filled my eyes. Dimly about us I saw pressure ridges as high as the machine. We had, undoubtedly, struck one as we came down. Along the extreme edge of the lower wing the fabric was torn. The machine still rested on the skis, but they had turned on their sides, the stanchion twisted and broken.
>
> It was too dark to see well and the snowdrift too thick for close examination of our machine or position. We climbed back into the cabin. Few words were exchanged. Courses, wind, and speed were briefly discussed; position estimated.
>
> The intense strain of the past two hours of flying over the Arctic Ocean through the blizzard after sunset had left us weak and tired. Eielson stretched out in a sleeping bag on top of the empty gas tank and I huddled in a corner of the cabin and we slept.

Then, especially if you have been thinking that every flier that lands on the floating ice of the Arctic sea will have to die in pathetic hardship unless he is rescued, you will find thrilling the simple account of how Wilkins and Eielson waited five days for good weather so they could tell by astronomical observation just where they were, how they drifted 167 miles, their ice floe driven by a storm, how they built during that time two sledges from the wreckage of the plane, dragged them later towards land a few days, fell in the water now and then as they were scrambling from one floe to another (once up to the armpits at 30° below zero), abandoned the sleds when the ice became too rough to drag them over, and made land in thirteen days "without serious difficulty." Such men, with such knowledge of Arctic technique, replace the gruesome tragedies of mere heroism with the romance of competence in the story of our advancing knowledge of the Far North.

"Flying the Arctic" is a book by itself that you cannot summarize. Read for information of true Arctic conditions, it satisfies; taken as an antidote for the hero talk and sob stuff, it has a clarifying tonic value. Its literary quality gives needed proof that sometimes a thing worth writing about is done by a man who knows how to write.

Poet and Jail-bird

FRANÇOIS VILLON: A Documented Survey. By D. B. WYNDHAM LEWIS. New York: Coward-McCann. 1928.

Reviewed by GARNET SMITH

THE delay in the appearance of this biography served to whet curiosity. Mr. Wyndham Lewis is known for an "agreeable rattle" whose gay trifling veils good taste and common sense. He shoots social follies as they fly. Brilliantly he submits the literary vogues and styles of the moment to the test of *pastiches* and humorous exaggeration. Or, no longer dissembling his deep concern in the things of the soul, he shows how Machiavelli influenced the Elizabethans, or how the latest metaphysical theories of Time-Space endanger our art and conduct. And here at length is a "documented survey" of the life and testaments, great and small, of that Master François Villon who sang in far-off days within the shadow of the gallows. What would Mr. Wyndham Lewis make of this prince of thieves and poets? The imagined possibilities of the book were so engaging that one was almost reluctant to exchange the promise for the performance.

The patent difficulty of the case was that, despite the laborious researches of Longnon and Champion, the documents of fact are too scanty. Mr. Wyndham Lewis, on a single page, gives us a "*conspectus temporum*" or short view that is pretty much the whole view obtainable of the life of François Villon, A. M.; and then proceeds to fill out the larger half of his book with this same life. Not that he joins those would-be picturesque biographers of an older school who, in default of material, evoked happenings which their hero might have observed, or introduced us to personages whom he should have known. Mr. Wyndham Lewis is too adroit for such pitfalls. Nor does he care to consort with those too ingenious biographers of newest pattern who, applying the whole art of the novelist, shape the illustrious to their own fancy. Rather he is content, in preliminary and vivid chapters, to set out the assured background: the university and town of Paris when Charles VII. and Louis XI. reigned, and the wretched Hundred Years of War had brought as its sequel the disintegration of the Middle Ages. Whereupon he addresses himself to the life, employing the barest and reasonable assumptions, and fully equipped with eager sympathy and sustained vision. And so, finding small fault or none at all, mindful at most that dispute is possible as to this or that detail, one comes to the abundant and valuable pages in which the written deeds of the man are analyzed.

* * *

For, after all, Villon is his own sufficient biographer; and what one asks is that no touch of self-revelation shall be missed. From this running commentary, along with its appended "Cream of the Testaments" and selection of famous versions, there emerges the conviction, if one had it not already, that Villon is of the abiding poets. He is Parisian, French, and universal. The dying Middle Ages found a last voice in him, and France its first modern. Rabelais, Régnier, and La Fontaine, are of his lineage. He represents his race in mingling gaiety and sadness, in meeting misfortune with quips and shrugs. Veracious, acquainted only too well with bitter and ugly realities, he yet can seek refuge in beauty and affection. Shifting from mood to mood, intense, despairing, wistfully desirous of the better course and following the worse, he has the whole secret of that "romantic irony" which the Byron of the "Don Juan" and the German Romantic School, with Heine, were to use. Of a truth, this "sad bad glad mad brother" of ours, this Till Eulenspiegel in the flesh, this kinsman of Eumolpus in Petronius and Diderot's "Neveu de Rameau" and Verlaine's own Verlaine, was a criminal and rare poet.

Mr. Wyndham Lewis has done so exceedingly well by his hero in the way of criticism and biography that one may excuse an occasional Puck-like gibe at his own contemporaries. It is but pretty Fanny's way, and a matter of indulgent smiles. These "asides," freakish sallies, extra flourishes of a lively pen count as nothing against such picturesque and dramatic pages as those which review Villon's five years of vagrancy or the prison hours in which he awaited a shameful death. But why does Mr. Wyndham Lewis, misliking the present literary and social posture of affairs, reserve a special pillory

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for certain eminent Victorians—Tennyson, Rossetti, and Stevenson? (And two of these had wrought in favor of Villon!) To disparage immediate predecessors is a wonted and wanton foible of youth. Surely Mr. Wyndham Lewis, using the touchstone of ridicule, might here have turned it against himself. Or has he perchance been consulting the caricatures of Mr. Max Beerbohm, and taking them too seriously? Instead of snatching at whatsoever stick for whatsoever dog, satirists worthy of the name have recourse to permanent platforms and lofty principles of judgment. And hereupon one cannot but recall a French method, dating from the times of Joseph de Maistre. You climbed as it were to the balcony of the Latin church, assumed to be sole and universal, and thence derided—or spat upon—the populace below, the victims of all error.

Among ourselves, Mr. Hilaire Belloc, Mr. Chesterton, and Mr. Wyndham Lewis, avail themselves of the convenient contrast between the Age of Faith and that of Industrialism, largely overlooking mediæval defect. There is no question of Villon's sincerity; no need to gainsay Mr. Wyndham Lewis when he insists upon Villon's possession of religious faith, patriotism, filial love, and gratitude. Villon, in short, aspired; but also loved the fleshpots. That religion of his may indeed have "run through the drab chronicle of his life like a bright gold thread." But religion, if one in essence, admits many a form.

Russia in Revolution

THE FALL OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE. By EDMUND A. WALSH. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1928. $3.50.

FATHER WALSH is Vice-President of Georgetown University and for the better part of two years he served in Russia as director of the Papal Relief Mission, a position in which he administered Catholic relief and treated with the Soviet Government regarding Roman Catholic interests in Russia. Since leaving Russia, in late November, 1923, he has lectured at Georgetown on Russia, given frequent talks on the same subject before other audiences, and written articles for *The Atlantic Monthly* on various aspects of Russia in revolution.

His book, which includes much of the matter thus previously offered in other forms, is, as he himself explains, not a "formal" history of Russia, nor an apotheosis of the Revolution in the Carlyle manner, nor an indictment of Bolshevik theory and practice. (In most of the public discussions on conditions in Soviet Russia to which Father Walsh has contributed, he has taken rather definitely the "anti" side, and possibly this view will be more energetically brought out in his forthcoming volume on the Soviet State itself.) Here, rather, he endeavors to "portray certain outstanding personalities and major events, in the hope of supplying the perspective" necessary for the ordinary reader who wishes to escape propaganda and his own loose or uninformed thinking.

The result is an unusually readable narrative, in which the essence of a very considerable amount of reading and research—on the origins of the Russian people and nation, the background of the Revolution, the nature and growth of Marxian theory—are presented in an almost wholly painless form, together with lively first-hand observations of the author himself, and an always interesting and often dramatic treatment of the human moods, motives, and underlying passions of the principal actors themselves.

Dr. Walsh has a keen sense of theatre—as all are aware who have heard him speak—and a technique, at once dynamic and suave, for expressing it. At times, indeed, this instinct for drama runs just the least bit away with him—not that he overstates facts, as such, but that he risks the esthetic danger of letting his reader see his strivings for effect instead of dealing out his facts with seeming disinterest and letting them speak for him. The tabloids themselves, in their cruder style, could scarcely have gone farther, for instance, in squeezing the last drop of agony out of the execution of the royal family in the cellar at Ekaterinburg. We must hear of the "soft bodies" through which the executioners' bayonets, after the shooting, were savagely thrust.

Dr. Walsh has another occasional mannerism which "goes over big" with luncheon-discussion groups or Woman's Clubs, but is less suitable in such a work as this. "Ringed round by the bayonets of the Preobrazhensky and Volinsky regiments," he says, in speaking of the Russian autocracy, "its ukases executed by the knouts of Cossacks and the flashing sabres of the Hussars, it defied the elements for three hundred years—until the deluge came. . ."

Well, there was a Preobrazhensky and a Volinsky regiment, to be sure, among scores of others, and these names, especially the first, pronounced correctly and in a tone at once guileless and slightly pontifical, have been known to make the jaws of a whole roomful of entranced listeners drop, and convince them that in those two mysterious and hitherto unheard-of nouns was somehow or other concealed the secret of the power of the Romanovs.

Similarly, in the first sentence of his book, Dr. Walsh, quoting Chicherin's remark that the Soviet Government was the oldest in Europe, observes that "if by government that astute diplomat understood a given cabinet or a *sovnarkom* exercising supreme power and performing the customary administrative functions, etc., etc." Why drag in a bit of Bolshevik slang which adds nothing to the definition already made in English and will not be understood by one out of a thousand English-speaking readers?

At one of the luncheon-discussions aforesaid, this sort of thing might pass for the globe-trotter's harmless affectation, but one is compelled to take it a bit more seriously on a work which lays claim to scholarliness and is dedicated to clearing away "loose thinking" on the subject of Russia.

Plate from "Die Schriftgiesserei in Schattenbild." From the Fleuron, No. VI, Edited by Stanley Morison (Doubleday Doran), a review of which appeared in last week's Compleat Collector

All such irritations are, however, largely questions of accent and shading and have not kept Father Walsh from writing an extremely interesting and useful book. Nicholas II. and the Czaritsa and Rasputin; Kerensky, Miliukov, Kornilov; and the beginnings of Lenin, Trotsky and the rest—all these and many others are here, with the atmosphere in which they moved and breathed. Specially valuable to the man in the street, who has heard little else since Russia began to be talked about but the red-faced tirades of "pro" and "anti" Bolsheviks, is the rich and colorful background which Father Walsh fills in and which includes not only the Revolution of 1905, and the outstanding features of the whole revolutionary movement in Russia during the last century, but other significant currents going clear back to Rurik. Scarcely less useful, to those who are better informed about Russia, but have not yet had time to read all the memoirs, is the ingenious and informative way in which the author has picked out and dovetailed quotations and paraphrases from all sorts of significant contemporary sources.

"Several writers," says *John O'London's Weekly*, have recently recalled that Dr. Lang, the next Archbishop of Canterbury, once wrote a novel. It is difficult to lay hands on, for it has long been out of print and the Archbishop has several times declined offers to republish it. A book with delightful qualities, it is called 'The Young Clanroy,' and is a story of the '45 rebellion told by a Highland chieftain's son who took part in it. Prince Charlie comes into the narrative, and there is what film producers call a 'love interest.'"

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KING AKHNATON. A Chronicle of Ancient Egypt. By SIMEON STRUNSKY. New York: Longmans, Green & Co.

Reviewed by ELMER DAVIS

THE jacket of Mr. Strunsky's book is adorned by a profile of King Akhnaton in his tall crown, and alongside it an astoundingly similar profile of President Wilson in his tall hat. And since it is tolerably well known that this historical novel of thirty-three hundred years ago deals with the Messianic lust of a despotic ruler, who wanted to save the world by organizing it in a League of Aton, it ought to be said first of all that it really is a historical novel, and a most entertaining one. Whatever an Egyptologist might think of its picture of life along the Nile, that picture is vivid and plausible to one who knows Egypt only from the pictures on the monuments and in the rotogravure supplements; this is the life of real people, who had their comprehensible worries and satisfactions—men of like passions with ourselves. Which, after all, is the first business of a historical novel. And in the history of Bek the son of Seker who tells the story—son of a provincial engineer, grandson of a stone mason, who got a scholarship in Amon College at Thebes, and presently became the drawing teacher and lover of the Princess Nefer—there is a pleasant Thackerayan flavor which made this reader regret that politics presently came in to spoil the enjoyment of life, as it so recurrently does.

* * *

For King Akhnaton, as even amateur historians know, was a reformer. He was constantly starting new enterprises in Egypt, and presently dropping them for something else; for he had a single-track mind, and yesterday's reform no longer interested him. Naturally he was bitterly hated by the vested interests, the Temple Corporations, headed by old Api the high priest of Amon; especially as he wanted to sweep away all the old gods of Egypt and worship only Aton, the deity whom he had made, as even devotees like young Bek perceived in the course of time, in his own image. That engaging but untrustworthy historian, Mr. H. G. Wells, described *Akhnaton as the Pharaoh who would not be a god.* Mr. Strunsky regards him rather as the Pharaoh who identified himself with the only god.

How Akhnaton's internal reforms would eventually have fared is hard to say; for as all readers of the Tell-el-Amarna correspondence know, Syria was in turmoil in those days. And presently Akhnaton felt that Egypt, wealthy and secure in its isolation, owed a duty to mankind; it ought to give peace to the harassed and bickering Old World. So young Bek found himself attached to the Pharaonic Commission to Negotiate Peace in Syria, which went with King Akhnaton to the great peace conference outside Jerusalem.

From there on you know the story; and from there on it declines somewhat in interest not only because the plot is familiar, but because the central character is so extremely disagreeable. Mr. Strunsky, of course, is a Wilsonian with reservations; and against his will, one suspects, his reservations get the better of him. This picture of a man who believed that one with God was a majority and who knew that God was on his side, who would make concessions to foreigners, but never to his political enemies at home, who regarded disagreement with his opinions as treason to the nation and blasphemy against God — it was doubtless intended as a sympathetic sketch of a Messiah *manqué*, a man of great and lofty aspirations tragically defeated by faults within himself. But it inspired this reader, at least, with an unprecedented impulse to go forth and lay a garland on the grave of Henry Cabot Lodge. Akhnaton had good intentions; so had Wilson; so has almost everybody else. It is a pity that the Christian ideal of virtue, unlike the Greek, does not give much weight to efficiency, subtlety, the capacity to realize good intentions.

* * *

However, if you can swallow your irritation at the protagonist, the chapters on the peace conference are immensely amusing. There is King Burra-Buryash of Babylon, who was willing to sign anything so long as the indispensable demands of Babylonian security were met by the cession of the left bank of the Tigris; King Minos of Crete, who favored universal land disarmament with the Cretan navy as the policeman to enforce the League Covenant; and the tangle of Hivites and Perizzites and Hittites and Amalekites who came before the con-

ference with their claims, all well founded somewhere back in history, for all of Syria. Not to speak of the Hebrews, who about that time were beginning to be interested in the reestablishment of a Jewish homeland in the regions where their patriarchal ancestors had wandered. This is good satire and it is not such bad history; Mr. Strunsky has not let himself be hampered by factual detail, but he does remind us, and with truth, that international politics, international discord, are thousands of years old. About the only novelty in our time is that we have applied to them an idealism which does not seem to work very well, except as a counter-irritant. And surely it is legitimate enough to interpret an egocentric idealist of thirty-three hundred years ago in terms of an egocentric idealist of our own day; that is one of the types which ages of evolution seem impotent to change.

But though the Messianic hope has never yet been realized, it would have been historical as well as an artistic error to imply that it is ever finally defeated; it is a serial never concluded, but always continued in our next. So when Akhnaton has finally collapsed, when the Old Guard again rules Egypt and the idealism of the peace conference is forgotten in a blend of pleasure-seeking and ideological reaction, we leave our young friend Bek as he leaves an old friend of his—a Jewish physician at the Egyptian court, just setting off to attend the circumcision of his cousin's son, a baby boy named Moses. *Ça ira.*

An Artist in the Family

ALL KNEELING. By ANNE PARRISH. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1928. $2.50.

Reviewed by HERSCHEL BRICKELL

MISS PARRISH'S new novel makes its bow to the public wearing the wreath of The American Booksellers Association. In theory, at least, it is the outstanding novel for September, and as such is supposed to have the backing of the members of that organization.

It is the first choice of the Book Selection Committee, composed of prominent booksellers and critics. This reviewer did not find Miss Parrish's new novel of absorbing interest, and while he is willing to admit the author's cleverness in satirical writing and her mastery of an effective, if mannered, style, reading the book was too much like devouring a large bowl of something pleasantly tart to the taste through several spoonsful, but with no variety and no surprises and therefore quite monotonous.

"All Kneeling" is the portrait of an egocentric, Christable Caine, born beautiful and hiding a complete selfishness behind her fragile good looks—her fragility as much a pose as her devotion to the happiness of others—who wrote a book of verse quite early in life, and on the strength of its false reputation, went off to New York to be Bohemian, and eventually become the wife of a rich man.

I think what I mind most about "All Kneeling" is the completely static quality of its characters. Christabel is revealed fully and completely in the first few chapters, and to the last word there is no evidence of change, so that the reader continues to hear the same thing said about the character in different words—she revolves slowly upon a pedestal with Time as the motor, while her creator points out the utter detestability that lies beneath the agreeable surface.

Perhaps the satirist is not required to make his people live and breathe, but the novelist must, and Christable has no reality for this reader. As for the rest of the cast in this acid comedy, Miss Parrish has sketched them in with a few strokes, some of them with an easy skill, others with the limit of impressionism, so that the whole takes on an aloof and curiously theatrical air. It is all very clever but there are 320 pages of it, even though the pages are wide of margin and large of type. . . .

Christabel continues her literary career after she marries her rich young man, and Miss Parrish makes merry at the expense of silly reviewers and the rest of the hangers-on of the writing business. She is dangerously explicit at times; for example, if we were still playing those question-and-answer games of a season or so ago, what alert person could tell us the name of the leading candidate for this shaft:

> But I fear you will never become a really great whimsical writer, because you can't very well be photographed smoking a pipe. . . .

There is something else that needs to be recalled perhaps and it is that Miss Parrish used the theme of "All Kneeling" in "A Pocketful of Poses." Her new book, on the whole, is of less consequence as a piece of fiction than "Tomorrow Morning" and I do not think it comes near the soundness of "The Perennial Bachelor," over the solidity of which played agreeably the bright, glittering style of Miss Parrish. The brightness and the glitter seem to have become more than a little tinselly in "All Kneeling."

With Miss Parrish's thesis, if one may impute a thesis to her, that writing, as in the case of Christabel, is nothing more than exhibitionism and an inevitable display of the vanity of the writer, I have no quarrel. Since she has so courageously laid bare the secrets of a poet-novelist, the only courteous response for some reviewer to make is to write a satire upon his profession. Or does it need satirizing?

A Family Saga

DAY OF FORTUNE. By NORMAN MATSON. New York: The Century Co. 1928. $2.50.

Reviewed by J. DANA TASKER

LIKE Dreiser, the author of "Day of Fortune" writes in an unaffected style that is very close to his characters. In this saga of a Norwegian-American family Mr. Matson's pen happily sketches the desperate, but futile attempts at acclimation. Not once does the novelist stand apart from his characters' moods; always he *is* the Chezness of the moment, whether that is of the first or the second or the third generation.

Because it is doled out in small quantities, the unbroken tragedy of the story does not grow oppressive. And although the unsolved problems and the vain longings of "Day of Fortune" are unmistakably like those of actual life, the book boasts charming flights of imagination. This is especially true in the passages that deal with the childhood of Peter Chezness. The conflicts and the essential helplessness of his experiences are an accumulation of the family temperament. He is the loneliest of them all. As the defeats of yesterday give way to dreams of to-morrow, Peter's to-day slips into a meaningless oblivion; he is dazed by the complexity of a life that never fulfils its brave promises. This is the most intense portrait in a novel that depends, for its interest, almost entirely upon a series of characterizing episodes. Few pieces of fiction as devoid of sequential action as Mr. Matson's can lay claim to such a continuity of positive enchantment.

The book opens on a quiet Norwegian pastoral scene:

> The mountains rising at the entrance to the fjord-Saegro on one side, Kjosnaes the other—seemed portals to somewhere utterly different from this world. As these were, so perhaps were the portals of heaven, Ola suggested, and there was a feeling of truth in this. One could imagine little people moving slowly through into a place of gray walls, of purple towers to the clouds.
>
> "It is cold in Heaven to-night," Ola said seriously; and then it was hard for Anna Marie to remember that her home was there at the foot of the black mountain, that beyond was the fjord, the birch woods, sheep and cows, and at the heart of the mystery only the familiar Saegro falls.

In hardly the same style, but with equal effectiveness, the author describes the wandering progeny of these first two lovers. After Bergen, Chicago burned; then earthquakes and fire destroyed San Francisco. In poverty and in prosperity the Chezness family carried on—until finally there was only Peter. He, too, carried on: as a drug-store clerk, in a railroad office, a newspaper reporter and later an editor. Lonely as ever, this time dreaming of New York, Peter is last seen crossing the Nevada desert, where

> There were barren hills, red as blood, and blue hills with patches of green and purple.

and

> Peter suddenly saw glory, as if a gray veiling were stripped instantaneously from all the landscape. The colored hills sprang into higher brilliance, the sunset was a mounting fire, and an Indian prospector, solitary beside his burro, was human courage standing stiffly as God in the wilderness.

A complete edition of the works of Samuel Butler, an author little known in Germany, is being brought out in German by the Phaidon-Verlag of Vienna. Herberth E. Herbitschka is the editor, and has translated most of the volumes himself.

The Wild West

COWBOY. By ROSS SANTEE. New York: Cosmopolitan Book Corporation. 1928. $2.50.

Reviewed by EDWIN L. SABIN

"I'LL never forget the thrill I got at the sight of them pole corrals an' the tall black-headed puncher standin' in the ranch-house door as we rode up, a-smokin' a cigarette. . . . For I always wanted to be a cow-puncher." When Mr. Santee typed these words in the opening chapter, "Runaway," of this his book, "Cowboy," he started something rare. Here is Wild West narrative that is literature—and it closely verges upon being "Treasure Island" literature. The first chapter, chronicling, in boyish Southwest vernacular, the runaway trail of two East Texas fourteen-year-olds, crazy to rope range cows instead of ranch-yard calves, chickens, and hogs, armed with the stock perfectly useless six-shooters, and seeking the land of romance where reigned the bronc' peeler and the top puncher, is so good that it is true. To be sure, they were overhauled by a genuine sheriff with a star, who to their disappointment ran them down instead of shooting them, but there are chapters to come. The hero of the tale is outfitted and cast loose by his understanding father and told to go get it, since he was bound to. He did.

Built around any theme, West or East, the story would still be refreshing. Whether or not it is the autobiography that it appears to be, "kin savvy?"—as they say. Ross Santee, of course, has been there. From "Runaway" through to the wind-up "I Make a Hand," the yarn, by the kid himself, of those Odyssean wanderings from cow outfit to cow outfit, with the burning desire to do anything just so that he might be taken on as a rider and a puncher, is honest, extremely natural, and, above all, sympathetic. Here the boy is, "all boots an' spurs," with dreams in his head and with the will to make them materialize. Oh, yes, everybody was kind to him; but oddly enough, until, reduced to a burro (a cowboy upon a burro!), he qualified for a job as wrangler with the Sixes, all the ranches had regretfully passed him along. None needed a top hand at that moment. If he had come yesterday—!

A fine character picture of the old workaday cow country of Arizona it is, too; painted in the language—which is, as may be said, a different language from that of Wyoming, for instance. It may be suggested for the study of manufacturers of cow-country thrillers. The chief shooting in "Cowboy" is done by the boss of the Sixes, Old Man Grimes, who after a few drinks of Old Crow lay upon his back in his bunk "shootin' at flies on the ceilin'." However, those employees who laughed, laughed outside the house. "We could hear the Old Man squall each time he hit a fly."

And even in Chapter XV, when he deemed that he had arrived—had been wrangling as a paid hand, could sit a pitching horse, and once in a while rope a cow or a mount—the kid "Button" is moved to observe:

> But I was a long way from bein' a cow-hand, an' I soon found it out. For I was just startin' in, in a game that takes most a life to learn. An' there's plenty of men who foller it all their life who never do make a top hand. They may learn to rope an' ride all right; but there's plenty of punchers who don't get no further than that. No man is a real cow-puncher till he's spent years at the game, an' knows what a cow is thinkin' of before she knows herself.

You see, "punchin' cows to a button means nothin' but ropin' an' ridin'"; and this remark is recommended to the digestion of future aspiring runaways, as well as to that of the magazine writer and the easy-chair reader.

"Illustrated by the author." The typical Santee sketches are delightful and many.

The Saturday Review of Literature

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The Bowling Green

The Folder

A client in Maryland writes:

I am returning the books. ("The Cat's Eye," by R. Austin Freeman; "The Western Avernus," by Morley Roberts; "The New Grub Street," by George Gissing.)

Austin Freeman reveals himself as a good fellow, reasonable, humane, and scrupulously fair with his readers. He seems to lack, though, the imaginative power to make his painstaking stuff fuse, and the crucial effect is somewhat desiccated. But it was conceded that this was not one of his best.

The Avernus book was grand. No lack of heat here. The book has both body and flavor. It has a special appeal for me because I am familiar with the country and conditions. The fact that Roberts found it so hellish is due partly to his own shortcomings. Clearly he had more than a touch of English insularity and in addition a bit of intellectual coxcombry which must have exasperated the oldtimers. But it is his very real sufferings which give his book its flavor.

I finished "The New Grub Street" last night. It is difficult to speak of this; too much like something which happened in the family. Very terrible and very true, and written with a disinterestedness that gives it an unbearable cutting edge. I have always intended to read this book, and am grateful to you for bringing me to it.

Harry Hansen writes:

Gossiping about the origin of Elia, it seems to come to me from some reading of years ago that Lamb's "gay light-hearted foreigner" of the old South Sea house was named Elia, and that Lamb so signed the first of the Essays when he wrote it for the *London Magazine* one hundred and five years ago. Much more interesting is a speculation first advanced by Byrne Hackett. He was examining one of Lamb's books and discovered that the name *Chas* was so written that it looked for all the world like Elia. He showed it to me at the time and it seemed to prove that Lamb had been practising the signature. There was the suspicion—a bit far-fetched, perhaps, but to me justified by the exhibit, that the Elia might have been a printer's misreading of Chas. I don't recall the name of the book but it is likely that other signatures by Lamb will show the same oddity.

Lamb's signature as we remember it was almost invariably "C. Lamb," not "Chas." But since the earlier allusion to the matter we have looked up Lamb's Letters. He wrote to his publishers in 1821:

Poor Elia, the real (for I am but a counterfeit), is dead. The fact is, a person of that name, an Italian, was a fellow-clerk of mine at the South Sea House, thirty years ago, when the characters I described there existed, but had left it like myself many years; and I having a brother now there, and doubting how he might relish certain descriptions in it, I clapt down the name of Elia to it, which passed off pretty well, for Elia himself added the function of an author to that of a scrivener, like myself.

I went the other day (not having seen him for a year) to laugh over with him at my usurpation of his name, and found him, alas! no more than a name, for he died of consumption eleven months ago, and I knew not of it.

So the name has fairly devolved to me, I think; and 'tis all he has left me.

In this same letter, incidentally, Lamb points out that Elia should be pronounced *Ellia*. With that other famous pseudonym, *Boz* (sounded *Boze*) it is probably one of the two most generally mispronounced aliases in literature.

There is much of the most extreme and admirable interest in the "Memories and Reflections" of Mr. Asquith—as one still finds oneself calling him, rather than Lord Oxford. I was struck with a small familiar pang when I saw this:

July, 1922. Dined at Grillion's [a small club] . . . . There was a discussion in which Fisher, Gosse and others took part, as to whether there was any good American lyric poet since Poe. The general opinion appeared to be in the negative.

I wonder whether any of the members of Grillion's had really read enough of recent American verse to form any opinion. Whether (to take only one random example) Lord Oxford himself had ever heard of a shy American poet who lived in Oxford for years—Louise Guiney. But the little note is so heavenly in its Olympic simplicity, and in its various connotations to any severe student of international humors, that I would not for anything have it otherwise.

Charts, maps, graphs, business diagrams, always have a potent fascination. I've been studying a little map prepared by the Business Department illustrating the geographical distribution of the 35,124 subscribers to the *Saturday Review*. It offers several very puzzling speculations. Why is it, I wonder, that both Illinois and Ohio have three times as many S. R. subscribers as their neighbor Indiana—traditionally the midland Bandusia? It is quite thrilling to learn that California, with 3,000 subscribers, ranks highest after New York State, just beating out Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania has exactly the same number of subscribers as New York State outside New York City. Why is it, I wonder, that California has ten times as many subscribers as Florida? Why has Oklahoma more than Florida? Why has Michigan twice as many as Wisconsin? Why, oddest of all, has the District of Columbia more than either the whole of Maryland or the whole of Virginia? Nevada comes lowest on our list, and yet we hear from visitors in that State that time hangs heavy on their hands.

Next after New York State, the numerical order runs like this: California, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Illinois, Ohio, New Jersey, Connecticut, Michigan, Texas. . . . What conclusions do the Keyserlings draw from this?

We quote, with judicious omissions, a correspondent of long standing, too little heard from lately:

Santayana, you may remember, speaks of an Indian summer of the mind which descended upon New England 75 years or so ago. I'm wondering if this Labor Day respite isn't an Indian summer of sorts. . . . .

It's a grand thing to have a three-day holiday when it's clear twice around the clock, when sunlit days are winy and honied, when the nights—ah, the nights—smell of cider and are strong to the taste. What a pity we work, sweat, dissemble, swink, cadge, smirk, just for a few days of joy and simplicity and high thinking once in a while! Why, for God's sake, if a man wants a white cottage at the end of a long unpaved country lane must he venture a lifetime against the chance he may be able to enjoy it When, As, and If? Why not grab it when he can? I suppose lunches at the R———, say, or membership in the Country (save the mark) Club do have something to do with it. But hell's bells, there'll always be plenty of people who delight in running things—the whole country included.

(The curtain is lowered here for an hour, indicating the entrance of callers and the discussion of liquor, Al Smith, motor cars, and the servant problem.)

Last night I got down that old master of life, shrewder than a thousand stockbrokers, W. H. Hudson. He told me of the dangers of revisiting places of pungent memories; of the joys of travel without a guidebook. And I took a turn in the half-light of one o'clock this morning (pipe smoke went straight up last night, an excellent sign) and wondered if Stratford would ever look the same as it did one fresh sunny morning when I turned a bend in the road from Mickleton, and the town lay in the valley before me. I wondered if Warwick and the Bowling Green Inn there would look the same as they did in the light of 9 p. m. of an English June—while Boots rushed pots of beer to mine host and me as we watched the bowlers and the darkness gradually crept over Warwickshire fields beyond. . . .

——— makes a superb bedside book, one with the Oxford Press catalogue and (I hope you know it) Macy's Grocery Catalogue—Cooper's Marmalade, Harvey's sauce for fish, game, steaks, etc., prepared only at E. Lazenby's Fish Sauce Warehouse, No. 6 Edwards Street, Portman Square, London (the label alone is worth the price of a bottle), Hymettus honey, etc., etc., not to mention Grey-Poupon, Moutarde de Dijon, in delightful little stone jugs at 29c. . . .

Though I have frequented Macy's grocery department, I confess with shame that I did not know of the catalogue. The little French mustard pots have long been highly favored by members of the Three Hours for Lunch Club, not merely for their contents when full, but for holding pencils and pipecleaners when empty.

Since we have allowed a gastrophile tinge to creep in here, we may as well quote from one of the Grub Street Runners, a young publisher who has been vacationing in Germany. To him we recommended a certain hotel in Freiburg which we remembered only as the Hotel Holy Ghost. We were not positive of the name, but we knew that in 1912 it was just across the market-place from the cathedral in that enchanting town.

G. S. R. reports:

B. and I went to Cologne, up the Rhine, to Heidelberg and Munich. From there we went walking south in the Bavarian Alps, heading for Freiburg. At Munich we insisted on having our luggage forwarded to the Hotel Holy Ghost here in Freiburg, pursuant to your instructions. They denied its existence. So we came to what sounded nearest, the Christlicher Hospiz. Drei Minuten vom Hauptbahnhof. Fernsprecher 4106. Schöne freie ruhige Lage. Prachtvolle Aussicht auf die Schwarzwaldberge. Zentralheizung.

First morning at the hotel did I consume two quarts of dunkles bier over mail. In the eve did we consume four bottles of Liebfraumilch (1921) and next day we discovered Freiburg. It all came about by strolling around the cathedral. There was the Hotel Dom-Geist, just as you said. We decided on a dinner there last night. We found the best room of all German pubs, to the left on entering. Chandelier of a beauteous lady, feet ending in stag horns, where the mermaid's tail should have been—and good dark panelling—and student caps—and a lovely Fräulein. We ordered ourselves 2 jg. hahn with white wine, and when the fowls appeared at 8.30 and we had them insunk our teeth we stopped and sighed. We had found IT. Such juicy morsels; such dirty fingers afterwards. Well it just changed all plans. We sent beers to the cook. We ordered two more chickens for today's lunch. We decided to come back to Freiburg and stay at the Dom-Geist. So we're off for a fine day's walk in the Black Forest to get an appetite for two more chickens. We drank your health.

Incidentally, our special representative in London, to whom we confided the agreeable responsibility of preparing a private thesis on Moselle wines, reports that by the generous co-operation of Mr. Francis Berry, the distinguished wine-merchant of St. James's Street, he throws up his cap for the following:

1921 Eitelsbacher,
1921 Dhroner Hofberg,
1921 Oberemmeler Zuckerberg,
1921 Wiltinger Braune Kupp.

Mr. Berry, who was gracious enough to give our representative a little personal tuition in this delicate matter, informed him:

The Dhroner comes from the Moselle proper. The Eitelsbach is from a little place in the valley of the Ruwer. Oberemmel and Wilting are both in the valley of the Saar, small places both, but they produce wines that are famous the world over amongst connoisseurs of German white wines.

The Green, according to its ancient custom, spares no stress nor strain to get always the authoritative and inmost information for its customers. We shall civilize some of our readers if it takes a lifetime!

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

The Battle of Bunker Hill

BUNKER HILL: Notes and Queries on a Famous Battle. By HAROLD MURDOCK. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1928. $8.50.

Reviewed by JOHN G. FITZPATRICK

MR. MURDOCK tells all that is needful about the battle of Bunker Hill and tells it in a remarkably satisfactory way. The battle, a mere incident (though the results were far from incidental) is given ample treatment in the 145 pages of text, nine illustrations and a map, all of which are good. The account, it is not a story, is presented in six chapters, each of which is a distinct entity yet cleverly interlocked; there is an ample array of selected facts which are marshaled within the redoubt and behind the rail-fence with such easy persuasiveness that they rout literary dulness with the same deadly effect with which the New Englanders pushed back the advancing British foe.

The British attack, the American defence, three die-hard myths and Sir Henry Clinton's military sensitiveness make up the record and by this method the ground is completely covered. Nothing is missing and the book will remain the standard work on Bunker Hill despite the author's modest hesitancy as to what may be found in the future when the Gage papers become available to investigators. The most satisfactory critic of New England is a sincere and honest-minded native with a sense of humor and this book has a number of quiet smiles scattered through its text. The blundering of the provincials is as freely admitted as that of the British commanders and the presence of a perfectly natural disinclination to being shot, which was observable on both sides, not ignored. The explanation of the British attack is logical and convincing and is in accord with the view of the librarian of the British War Office who recently disposed of the point by admitting that the frontal attack was made, largely because "the way round was undignified, neither British, frank nor manly . . . fetching a compass in the field was not (unfortunately) the British way." One of the interesting points to be noted is that the controversy over the battle afterwards, raged as fiercely among the Americans as it did among the British and Mr. Murdock takes humorous advantage of this.

The book is concisely written but there is an ambiguous phrase in the prefatory note where the battle is called an achievement that may well stir "the blood of any New-Englander whatever his percentage of Americanism." Surely it could not be admitted that a Bunker Hill background has failed to sustain robust Americanism in New England!

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The Modern English Novel,

TWO hundred and fifty years ago Perrault read a poem before the French Academy in which the claim was made that the literature which was then modern surpassed the literature of ancient Greece and Rome. Thence arose in France and England a famous dispute over the comparative merits of the new and the old learning, which was burlesqued by Swift in "The Battle of the Books." The great master of irony, taking the side of Greece and Rome, conceded that the moderns, though weak in substance, put for aught he knew more labor into "art and method," resembling in this respect spiders who lurk in dark corners and there weave out of their entrails intricate webs that cannot last long and gather dirt while they do last; whereas the ancients, it was said in words again made memorable by Matthew Arnold's remembrance of them, were like the bees who, never thinking of their skill in building, range in the sunshine "through every corner of nature" and fill their "hives with honey and wax, thus furnishing mankind with the two noblest of things, which are sweetness and light." No writer ever stated in more felicitous words the difference between the mere technique of literature and its substance and style than in the contrast between ephemeral cobwebs spread to catch unwary readers and the immemorial flights of the bees.

The old controversy between the ancients and the moderns we have with us yet. But just as space has ceased to exist, so time is threatened with annihilation. Time, the novelists who have turned philosophers say, is not actual but relative: there is no common yardstick by which it can be measured either as long or as short; whether it moves fast or slow is dependent upon what comes into one's consciousness. It was a jest of the late Professor Lounsbury that the gods of Homer, living in quiet luxury on Mt. Olympus, were satisfied to take a step once in a thousand years or once in ten thousand years, I forget which. Since those far-distant secular ages the passage of time has been enormously quickened, especially since the summer of 1914. When Swift marshalled his two armies for battle, two thousand years separated the moderns from the ancients. The interval is now approaching the vanishing point; a decade now counts for a millennium. As viewed by the young generation, the novelists who were in their prime before the Great War have been ancients for some years. They belong to a past dimly apprehended, to a history that is fast becoming legendary, in the view of some to a sick civilization, given over to talk and inhibited from action like the characters in the novels of Henry James. Wells and Galsworthy and Bennett still carry on, but being of the old order they are unable to recreate in art the mentality of a new world; they try to penetrate it, but they merely hover above it helplessly. The modern novel which was once theirs, has passed on to others, from whom it is in turn slipping away. "Whenever I hear of the new art," the Earl of Balfour has said, "I know that it is going to be the old art within a year or two."

* * *

So it has ever been in fiction since Defoe wrote "Robinson Crusoe." Having been born before the Armistice, I have seen the novel that is called "modern," several times over. Invariably attention has been directed towards changes in her looks and behavior since she was last exhibited. She has appeared with and without the "straws of life in her hair." This is a phrase taken from H. G. Wells. She has been long and she has been short, sometimes "long-short," and sometimes "short-long"; she has been lean and she has bulged beyond the line of beauty. Around 1890, before and after, she assumed a multitude of shapes and colors, chameleon-like, as her passions were awakened by the conflicting thought and emotions of the mauve decade. The ancients were then the mid-Victorians as well as all who had written novels before Dickens and Thackeray. To the oncoming generation to which I belonged it was an interesting and amusing sight to see novelists—seven or eight of them—who were standing in the front row, attacking the ghosts, their predecessors, in prefaces, introductions, and detached essays, while at the same time arguing openly or by indirection for their own superiority. "Debunking" is but a new name for an old pastime. Though they did not agree on what the novel was or on what it should be, one saying and another denying that it ought to show "an enthusiasm for humanity," they were one in the conviction that the ancients were mostly in the wrong, and that the novel in new hands was well on the way towards a finer and truer art.

The discussion centered round technique with substance relegated to the periphery. Stevenson, who had written beautiful romances and discovered in human nature Dr. Jekyl and Mr. Hyde, revamped Swift's web, leaving out of course the disreputable spider. The threads of a narrative, he insisted, should be brought together in "a web" of definite "pattern" or "texture" so as to resemble a piece of exquisite tapestry. Rhythm, in distinction from blank verse, which English prose had once had but had since lost, should be restored. On both counts Stevenson proved by an examination of "Guy Mannering" that Scott was clearly guilty. Rarely was there any semblance of art, he declared, in the great magician's "ill-written, ragged" books. And concerning Dickens, Stevenson asked, How could David Copperfield report verbatim conversations that took place before he was born or while he lay asleep in his basket? A novelist who knows his business never carries his hero's memory backward to the cradle. The right way is to leave omniscience to the powers above and to put into a novel only what the characters see or hear, as had been done, for instance, in "Treasure Island." A point of view—preferably of a single character—should be taken at the beginning and maintained to the end with never a shift in the vision.

* * *

In contrast with the slip-shod art of a former era, Stevenson set up Meredith, whose "Egoist" he had read "four or five times" over, and whose "Richard Feverel" contained one or two dramatic scenes unequalled since Shakespeare. So people began to read Meredith, where they saw the egocentric male anatomized more completely than ever before; where they saw women, too, who, quite different from "the rose pink" or "the dirty drab" girls of the past, were made fit companions for men—reasonably honest and strong physically or intellectually, who swam against running waters or ruled statesmen behind the visible scene. Not George Eliot, who had just been lowered into her grave at Highgate, but George Meredith, it was declared, was the first novelist who had ever had a clean-cut philosophy of life. The earlier Victorians were all sentimentalists whose chief occupation had been to "fiddle harmonics on the strings of sensualism." Their humor, rarely inherent in scene and character, was made up for a public that read comic almanacs. For true comedy, free from sentimentalism, it was necessary, except for sporadic instances, to go back to Congreve and Molière. The old racial laugh of Fielding, boisterous and vulgar, was long since outmoded. We should never laugh, we were instructed, at anything Meredith's characters might say or do. We should only smile.

A little later came George Moore, who complained that Thackeray was too reticent, that he had a way of stopping short on Becky Sharp when he should have gone on. As the siren slipped from the rock into the murky sea, Thackeray had remarked that the reader might take it for granted that she was about no good down there. This was not enough for his critic, who wanted to know precisely what Becky Sharp was doing under the dark waters. So, improving upon "Vanity Fair," George Moore wrote "Esther Waters."

* * *

The light of Hardy then illumined the whole realm of English fiction. In contrast with his contemporaries Hardy was mostly silent on the deficiencies of the novelists who had come and gone before him. He was more like the bee intent upon the wax wherewith to build his own habitation. He asked us not to be over-critical of Richardson's inaccurate observation of externals, but to regard rather the little fat printer's insistence that the real life of people is their emotional life within, to be read by their words and deeds; for it is "the waves of human emotion" that sweep men on to their fate. Likewise, instead of seeking out one of Scott's wandering tales in order to damn it, Hardy hit upon "The Bride of Lammermoor," which seemed to him "an almost perfect specimen of form"; and "the first thirty chapters" of "Vanity Fair" he instanced "as well-nigh complete in artistic presentation, along with their other magnificent qualities." Still, despite fine novels of the past, Hardy thought that "the art of writing them is as yet in its youth, if not in its infancy." All that any novelist can be expected to do, he held, is to make a few improvements here and there. Despite his modest reticence, we saw then as we see now that Hardy extended, far beyond Balzac and others, man's personality back into his inheritance and out into his social and intellectual environment, including the mystical influence of moor and woodland, through all of which ran the thread of man's destiny for weal or for woe.

* * *

While a century was slipping by, "a fit audience though few" watched Henry James in his progress through three phases of his art, from the clear objectivity of a Howells into impressionism, where the lines of plot and character were purposely blurred, and on into an almost complete transfer of a dramatic action from outer incident to the minds of his characters, who talked endlessly round and round things that seemed not to happen. At times narrative and description were confined to what might transpire in the give and take of dialogue. The traditional semblance of finality in the fate of his characters by their death or their marriage or their divorce was rejected. In his latest manner his novels were mental or emotional phases in the life of a small group of men and women. All that came after was silence. The threads of his carefully wrought designs sometimes, as in "The Ambassadors," converged in the consciousness of a central character, not for the display of a personality as in autobiography, but in order to give a single, unified mental picture of the whole psychological episode. James, thus applied to mental phenomena that unshifting point of view which Stevenson endeavored to maintain in the narration of external events. Words took the place of deeds.

These novelists in the course of nature had to give way to others, of whom five—four of them still living—reflected the outlook of our race in the years preceding the Great War. Then in their prime they were preëminently the modern novelists.

* * *

When Kipling's Anglo-Indian tales first reached the western world, they were classed with the empty adventures then current. There was a bored wit who longed for the time

> When the Rudyards cease from Kipling
> And the Haggards ride no more.

Compared with Stevenson's, Kipling's style and technique seemed loose and disjointed at a time when the public was unaccustomed to the directness and strength of the real language of men. The impression did not last long. Soon Kipling was proclaimed the great master of the short-story, which by pulling fore and aft he sometimes stretched into a novel as in "Kim." Before he left the East, he had spread under our eyes the whole panorama of civil and military India with the natives in the background, and brought home to Englishmen the consciousness of Empire.

Similarly Conrad's first novel appeared to a reviewer in America's best critical journal of the period as but "a mob of raging heathen, fighting for rum and wives on the banks of a river in Borneo." Another few years elapsed, and readers came under the enchantment of the Malay islands and shores with men who go down to the sea in ships vibrating with human passions and deeds. Little by little it became clear that what fascinated and perplexed Conrad was the mystery of man's conduct and fate, whether on land or in "the great world of waters."

Galsworthy discovered among the merchants and bankers of Victorian England the idea of property extending to the absolute ownership of one's wife, as if that were ever possible; and so complete was his portraiture of three or four generations of Forsytes that we believed him, forgetting the history of man, whose possessive instinct has been equally fierce since anything whatever has been known about him on this earth. One should not quarrel, however, over-

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by Wilbur Cross

much with the generalization of a great novelist, though it be but half true, which enabled him to expose and repudiate an age in which art, literature, manners, and morals were made subservient to the ideals and hypocrisies of a commercial upper-middle class whose position was buttressed by the laws of the realm.

Of other antecedents, Bennett found the symbol of life in industrial England, creating for his purpose the Five Towns, whose streets, buildings, and inhabitants he rendered in full outer detail, on the theory that nothing round about them should be left out if we are to know people as they are. The artist, Schiller had said, may be known by what he omits. But who can decide by a selective process, it was now asked, what incidents in a life have significance and what have none? So Bennett, avoiding the difficult problem of exclusion, put everything in. This was for English fiction a new procedure, which has had an immense influence on the novel in the United States as well as in England. Sinclair Lewis, for example, consumes a hundred pages in depicting a day, from sunrise to sunset, in the career of Babbitt.

Of all his contemporaries Wells took the most comprehensive view of the function of the novel, letting his mind play over the social and scientific theories of his times as they arose, going backward to primitive civilizations for contrast and forward to far-distant centuries in visions of a new and happier world. When tired of the earth he made trips to Mars and the moon for what he might see there. He was the most modern of the moderns.

Neither Wells, however, nor any of his contemporaries whom I have named is accepted by the new generation that is upon us. Wells, Galsworthy, and Bennett, Rebecca West affectionately calls "the uncles." No one of them, according to Virginia Woolf, looks at life directly. And of Conrad, Rose Macaulay remarks that his ship is already sinking below the horizon.

Kipling, it is still admitted, gave us the pageant of India, but the soul of India that lies beneath color and movement escaped him—which is perfectly true, as any one may see who has read "A Passage to India" by E. M. Forster, wherein, thrice shifting his point of view in a manner that Stevenson would have condemned, the author presents the native as he appears to himself, as he appears to the British official, and as he really is when his mind is laid bare, revealing "a civilization which the West can disturb, but will never acquire." The comparison is of course wide of the mark. Kipling is essentially a romancer. Forster is a psychologist. Each has accomplished his purpose, which has been to tell the story of life honestly, in accordance with his own temperament.

* * *

James, too, has been assailed, but the fact nevertheless remains that the later psychological novel has adopted certain characteristics of his method, of which the chief is the direct presentation of character so that we seem to see men and women in the very act of observing, thinking, feeling, and remembering. Some of James's descendants, casting aside his rigid selection of only those mental acts that cohere in a fixed pattern, have professed to give all, however trivial, that passes in the minds of their characters, so that the account may be complete. Their art is analogous to Bennett's, with a shift of the scene from the life outside to the life within. They have no fear of becoming dull as they meander along the stream of semi-consciousness. Gertrude Stein and James Joyce, for all his perverse genius, are the bores of contemporary fiction, with rivals, however, in another set in whom the remembrance of scenes and experiences long since past keep their novels moving simultaneously along three or four different planes which may or may not intersect. Over the question who invented this manner of depicting all the layers of human consciousness there is some dispute. The honor probably belongs to Dorothy Richardson, though Gertrude Stein seems to claim it by a decade. In this way of writing Sherwood Anderson among American novelists has succeeded best.

Virginia Woolf stands apart from the rest by virtue of the delicate fabric she has woven. No feminine novelist in my memory has shown in her style a like sensitiveness to beauty. "Life," Mrs. Woolf writes, "is not a series of gig lamps, symmetrically arranged; but a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display, with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible?" Virginia Woolf has tried to get further down than James was able to go beneath the mere apparitions of human behavior into the real self that lies on the threshold of being, frankly admitting that no one can ever quite reach that home of vague and uncertain desires.

In literary revolts there is always involved an illusion. No writer, however hard he may try, can break the force of tradition. Hardy, who saw clearly, remarked midway in his career that "in fiction there can be intrinsically no new thing at this stage of the world's history. . . . The utmost which each generation can be expected to do is to add one or two strokes toward the selection and shaping of a possible ultimate perfection." These words are exact and true. The English novel for the past two centuries hangs together in spite of many external differences which more or less fade when they are viewed in perspective. The substance of the novel, it is true, has expanded or contracted in quick response to the prevailing interests and outlook of the public. But human nature has not yet changed materially, perhaps not at all. What makes it seem to have changed more than it has is a transvaluation of old moral ideas—a process which, though always going on, is greatly accelerated by social upheavals such as the Great War. The problem of the novelist has been how best to present his men and women so that his age will understand them. As Swift contended in the passage I quoted at the beginning, the quarrel between the moderns and the ancients, though it may concern what should go into a novel, is primarily over the question of technique.

The course of the novel, it may be inferred, has not been forward in a straight line. It has had a way of curving in upon itself. The young novelist, however much he may resent the accusation, goes back, it may be unconsciously, to earlier practitioners of his art and modifies and develops what he finds there congenial to his temperament. Is it the satirical manner he would cultivate? He may learn from Smollett as well as from Sinclair Lewis. Is it irony? There is Fielding or Thackeray as well as Galsworthy. Is it sex? He may regale in "Moll Flanders" or in "Many Marriages." Does he want the facts of birth? He may read "Tristram Shandy" or any one of a score of moderns. If he desires to follow day by day, hour by hour, the emotions of a girl hard pressed by a scoundrel, he has at hand Richardson, who, it was said by his contemporaries, "sounded the depths of the female heart" in the seven volumes of "Clarissa Harlowe." It was an extraordinary feat since surpassed only by Proust in his fourteen or fifteen volumes of minute analysis.

* * *

In the past lie strewn everywhere intimations of all the methods practised by contemporary novelists. At the will of the writer, narrative since Defoe has been direct and indirect, the time sequence has been rigidly followed and it has been broken up, emphasis has been placed upon the outer act and upon the inner drama, upon plot or design, and from the years immediately preceding the French Revolution often upon instruction. Since Sterne gesture and various muscular movements of the body, including account of the heart beats, have been employed to show the working of the mind within. "The lifting of an eyebrow" was a recurrent phrase in Meredith; and George Eliot knew how to interpret "a glance, the quivering of a lip or an eyelid." After them we had the "little brown dimple" that appears for a second in a blonde's pair of blue eyes and is quickly absorbed in "the azure overflow."

The return to the past, however, is never retrogression when considered as a whole. Despite twists and turns, backward and forward movements, the novel is always moving on to new issues. Scene and background and the description of the dress or the appearance of characters are, for instance, all rudimentary in Fielding's novels. These externals were brought into fiction by Scott, from whom it was a circuitous journey through Balzac to Hardy and Conrad, who interpreted nature through the moods of their characters, endowing things without them with sentient life. Nor is reverie as employed by the Victorians quite the same as that flow of consciousness backward which has come in with the new psychology. Madame Bovary now and then surveys her past for the enlightenment of the reader on certain phases of her conduct. But it never occurred to her to relate through memory all her emotions since childhood, as if they would be interesting in and for themselves apart from the story. "The stream of consciousness," which runs through contemporary fiction, was more directly anticipated by Sterne in "Tristram Shandy," in which the narrative is playfully organized on Locke's theory of "the association of ideas."

Again, in a great scene George Eliot tells her readers about the moods, impulses, and hesitancies of Dr. Lydgate as he drove on leisurely to the infirmary where as a director he was destined to cast a vote that would reveal his inner self. Were George Eliot living and writing to-day she would not stand off and probe from the outside that wavering mind. She would identify herself more intimately with Dr. Lydgate, depersonalizing herself, so as to create the illusion of direct self betrayal. The result would be essentially the same, but the art would be different. To go on, Willa Cather in "Death Comes for the Archbishop" has revived chronicle history, older than Froissart; and Thornton Wilder has revived linked biographical sketches, older than Malory, in "The Bridge of San Luis Rey." The accomplishments of both are so admirable that one forgets for the moment that they are reshaping ancient literary forms into another beautiful, but less substantial art.

These examples are indications of the way that fiction is ever renewing itself. Like all the rest, the novelists that are called modern in the year 1928 have lighted their candles at the fires of their predecessors, though the flames they now display may not look much like the original fires.

The foregoing article is part of an address delivered before the American Academy of Arts and Letters shortly to be issued by the Yale University Press. Its author Wilbur Cross, is the Editor of the Yale Review, *dean of the Yale Graduate School, and Professor of English in Yale University. In addition to "The Development of the English Novel," one of the best books in its field, he is the author of "Life and Times of Laurence Sterne," "The History of Henry Fielding," and "An Outline of Biography," and the Editor of many college texts. We append a brief bibliography of works in the field of Professor Cross's article.*

Aspects of the Novel. By E. M. FORSTER. New York: Harcourt, Brace. 1927. Gay comment by the author of "A Passage to India" on the modern British novel.

Contemporary American Novelists. By CARL VAN DOREN. New York: Macmillan. 1922. This is an excellent book covering the first twenty years of the century.

For the earlier period:

The English Novel. By SIR WALTER RALEIGH. New York: Scribner's, 1894. An illuminating account of the English novel from mediæval romance to Scott.

The Development of the English Novel. By WILBUR L. CROSS. New York: Macmillan. 1899. This book begins with the Arthurian romance and ends with Kipling. It has a bibliography and a reading list.

Light Reading of Our Ancestors. By LORD ERNLE. New York: Brentanos. 1927. A most interesting, though uncritical, account of fiction from the Greek romances to Scott.

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Books of Special Interest

The Bible Translated

THE OLD TESTAMENT: An American Translation. By ALEXANDER R. GORDON. THEOPHILE J. MEEK, J. M. POWIS SMITH (editor), and LEROY WATERMAN. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1927. $7.50.

Reviewed by HENRY J. CADBURY

FOLLOWING the so-called American translation of the New Testament by Professor E. J. Goodspeed comes an American Old Testament. The appropriateness of the adjective in either case may be questioned. Certainly the language used is not more provincially American than that of the older versions is provincially British. In very few instances does a dignified and idiomatic rendering of the Bible into a modern tongue occasion dialect distinction. The translators are three of them Americans; they are, in fact, a Chicago professor and two of his former pupils. Fortunately again the printed page shows of course no local accent nor even the learned terminology of Chicagoese technical prose. Though America has contributed its share to the modern research of the Old Testament language and text, the learning on which all modern students rely is international. In so far as this translation embodies the sum total of ancient and modern wisdom concerning the meaning of the Old Testament it is preëminently an international work. Geographical and personal reasons justify an editor in associating with himself friends and fellow-countrymen, but nothing except certain advertising objectives can account for emphasizing that a Bible translation was "made in America." It would not be surprising if other countries should meet the claim by a spiritual protective tariff against it. Perhaps in Chicago one remembers now how little an earlier famous book deserves to be called after King James or to be accounted "authorized."

The nature of the work was revealed at its best in "The Psalms" by Professor J. M. P. Smith, published separately a few years ago and reviewed somewhat fully by the present reviewer in this *Review*. There are two difficulties in evaluating a new Biblical rendering that at once beset the critic. In the first place, he cannot read through the thousand or more pages of the Old Testament often enough and carefully enough and soon enough to notify the public of the value of the work while it is still fresh on the bookstalls. Only after much continuous reading and more of casual use can the full value of such a work become manifest. Even after months of use and consultation the present writer can speak only of general impressions.

The second and major difficulty of reviewing a new Biblical translation is the varied and vigorous prejudices of the reading public. How can the reviewer inform every one from the Fundamentalist to the ultra sceptic—not to mention various sorts of scholars—just what each will think of this book? What is meat to one is poison to another.

How the same facts about it may have from different points of view the opposite valuation can be illustrated as follows:

Assets	*Liabilities*
Clear, uncrowded page	Bulky and heavy volume
Gives the complete Hebrew Scripture	Omits the New Testament
Uses the familiar "The Lord"	Fails to suggest that God has a proper name
Raises few controversial questions	Ignores many illuminating results of literary research
Prints the Pentateuch continuously	Does not indicate or compare parallel accounts
Individual liberty of several translators	Many slight inconsistencies

Some will condemn this book because it is not Elizabethan English. Indeed, many persons, some of whom ought to know better, entertain an almost superstitious regard for the literary quality of what was only a sixth or seventh revision of Tyndale and Coverdale. Any departure from that is prejudged *ipso facto* as anathema. Others will doubtless think the language too conventional. In some matters it strikes a compromise; for example, in the pronoun for the second person singular. In order to be up to date, every one, God included, must be made to say "you" to one person. But when men are addressing God, the editors use the old-fashioned Quaker thou, thy, and thee.

Indeed, compromise is perhaps a prevailing element in the book. It aims to be both original and conservative. It departs willingly from the Hebrew text where that seems at fault, but it is often wary of violent change. It lists in an appendix over four thousand such departures, but many scholars will feel that even this is conservative. It sticks to the conventional order of books and even (with the slightest exceptions) of verses—a convenience to be sure in matters of reference. But it forfeits the opportunity to suggest to the reader even the most assured results of literary and chronological criticism. Its section headings are helpful but infrequent. Unfortunately the type does not always indicate whether they are ancient or modern. There are no footnotes. The value of the book must depend on the actual wording of the translation.

Here particularly, without making an exhaustive and continuous comparison with both ancient text and modern materials, one must speak of general impressions. The English does not aim at the literary distinction of some of Moffatt's Old Testament. But it is dignified, often idiomatic to both English and Hebrew. Even original wordplays are reproduced sometimes; at other times the attempt is wisely avoided. If the familiar English version is still the inevitable rendering of the Hebrew, the translators do not go out of their way to avoid it. But they do not hesitate to introduce other equally idiomatic expressions (as for example in the book of Job "kith and kin," "look daggers," "cronies").

Translators have often debated whether the same original word should have the same English rendering at each occurrence. Certainly when its meaning is identical it should, especially in parallel passages. So the modern reader can get some impression of the literary relation in underlying texts. No such uniformity is achieved in the present work—and in view of the independent labors of the several translators and of the difficulty of consistency even in a short compass this is not to be wondered at. But "messenger" and "angel" do not suggest to the uninitiated modern reader an identical original, neither do "pillar" and "holy stone." But they render in each case the same Hebrew. A new invention of the translators apparently is the word "harlotrous."

The text as a whole reads smoothly. In many cases it is beautiful and quite sublime. Often this is due to the indestructible poetic quality of the original, as is the case with the Song of Songs, Job, and the many lyric passages in Jeremiah. In several sections the original elegiac or dirge meter has been reproduced very effectively in the English. The single column page has permitted the printing of all the poetic sections in the manner that brings their character to view most effectively.

The most crucial question is the interpretation of the Hebrew in specific passages. Here one cannot expect perfection, and every scholar will find fault in specific instances and sometimes with good reason, while the ignoramus will no doubt be inspired with unreasoned delight or anger as certain favorite renderings do or do not appear. The preacher will miss some of his favorite texts, like "God hath set eternity in their hearts" at Eccles. iii. 9, where the substitute that the American translators give is perhaps equally erroneous. They have rightly changed Job xiii. 15, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him," but have allowed to stay at Esther iv. 14 the doubtful "who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this." For the noun in the passage "Thy gentleness hath made me great" one translator (2 Sam. xxii. 36) substitutes "response," another (Psalm xviii. 36) "help."

There are marks of haste in some parts of the translation, but what was written was well printed and "proof-read." The work is not final, perhaps not even up to the standard of the best modern scholarship. If, however, it is read either where the older version is used or where heretofore the Old Testament is little known, it will not fail to transmit to our generation some of the literary and religious excellences that belong to the Bible, whether in its Hebrew form or "translated out of the original tongues."

Another biography has been added to the literature on Keats, this time the work of a Frenchman. "La Vie de John Keats," by Albert Erlande (Paris: Nouvelle Revue Française), is a book well fortified by learning and understanding.

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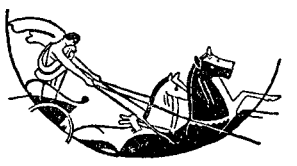

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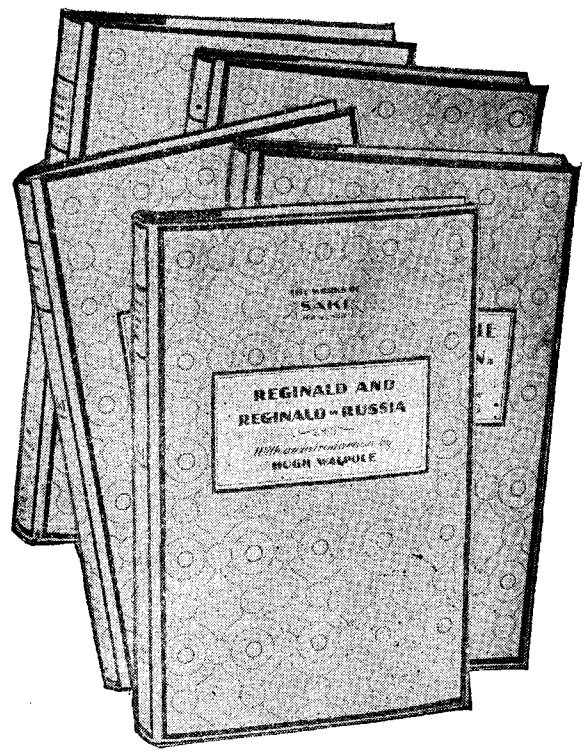
"SAKI" was the pen name of one of the most original wits that ever flourished in England: H. H. Munro. Killed during the war, he left behind him a small number of books and a select number of enthusiasts. Now a collected edition of his works has been published—A. A. Milne, G. K. Chesterton, H. W. Nevinson, Maurice Baring, Lord Charnwood, Hugh Walpole all contributing introductions to these volumes.

Shouts from the housetops

The first two to appear in this country were THE CHRONICLES OF CLOVIS and THE UNBEARABLE BASSINGTON, a book of short stories and "an almost perfect novel" (*New York Times*). Immediately the critics started shouting from the housetops. From *The World* came the shout that "We have tasted 'Saki' and we are his. One taste of 'Saki' should make the whole world kin, as well as mellow." Edward Davison in *The Saturday Review* announced that "he is a little classic."

Peck's Bad Boy or Oscar Wilde

Then the comparisons began. Many compared him—and favorably, too—to Oscar Wilde. Others chose Peck's Bad Boy and Max Beerbohm, Peter Whiffle and Ring Lardner, W. W. Jacobs and Arthur Machen, O. Henry and Swift, Somerset Maugham and Omar Khayyam, Mark Twain and W. S. Gilbert, Rudyard Kipling and Charles Lamb. There



"'Saki' is a habit rather than an author; once you get it fastened upon you, you read everything he wrote as fast as it comes out."
— May Lamberton Becker *in The Saturday Review*

seemed to be a slight difference of opinion as to his prototype but a complete unanimity as to his merit.

Then up spake Christopher Morley

"No one is so morose and introvert that his tonsils cannot be wrung by 'Saki's' arsenic merriment," said Mr. Morley, and Elinor Wylie seconded the notion. Two more books appeared: BEASTS AND SUPER-BEASTS and THE TOYS OF PEACE, both volumes of stories. Still not a dissenting voice! Edward Hope in *The Herald-Tribune* grew profane: "The deuce! You'd probably better get the 'Saki' books. You'll probably love them." Alexander Woollcott waxed lyrical. *The New Masses* and *The Boston Transcript* agreed! *The New York Times* endowed him with "the wit and wisdom of La Fontaine, and the magic and charm of Hans Andersen."

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Foreign Literature

A New Barbusse

FAITS DIVERS. By HENRI BARBUSSE. Paris: Ernest Flammarion. 1928.

Reviewed by AMELIA VON ENDE

The ancients dedicated their works or their deeds to the *deo ignoto,* the unknown god. I do not believe in God, but I do believe, alas! in the unknown. I dedicate this book to the unknown among the unfortunate, the unknown of flesh and bone, the mass . . . the submerged, the ruined, the effaced, the countless multitude, *invisible, yet visible.*

I do it in the sign of justice, of the palpitating, scientific law which embraces everything down here. Some day or other the destiny of mankind must find its balance on the earth, and we shall finally hear the steps, still silent, of those whom we have set marching.

WITH this dedication the author of "Le Feu," "Clarté," "Paroles d'un Combatiant," "Les Bourreaux" (containing the results of a journey of investigation in the Balkans), "Jesus," and other works that give him a place apart from any group or school of modern French writers, introduces his latest book. It is a volume of sketches, presenting indeed "divers *facts*" in the frame of short narratives. One cannot call them *short stories, because they are so widely different from what is usually embraced by this term. They are divers in matter,* but sadly uniform in spirit. For they are a formidable *"J'accuse!"*, an arraignment of modern society, more sweeping than any that has come from the most radical critics of the present social order. Whereas the latter deal in sonorous phrases, which in time evaporate, Barbusse's facts are bound to sink deep into our conscience and our memory.

There is no attempt at embroidery, or projecting these facts through the medium of the poet's fancy—for Barbusse is after all a poet, one in the sense of Ibsen—into the realm of fiction. They are unadorned records of crimes committed against humanity by the military, the political, the social, the ecclesiastical powers. They are transcripts of reality, of scenes witnessed, people met by the author, almost crude in their attempt at recording the truth. But they have a dramatic force which is overwhelming. Each of the sketches tells a tragedy which imprints itself indelibly upon the reader's mind. The author makes his people live their martyrdom before our eyes, as if we had witnessed it all.

Had these victims of "the letter that killeth" and that inhumanity to man which in our modern civilization furnishes material for a martyrology beside which medieval chronicles pale into insignificance, been persecuted, tortured, and massacred for their religion, they would be immortalized by a John Fox of to-day in a new "Book of Martyrs." Perhaps Barbusse is doing for them what Fox did for the victims of religious intolerance. For notwithstanding his assertion that he does not believe in God, he is moved by a spirit of religious devotion to an ideal, which is not the ideal of the man in the street, or the worn-out society woman, who all seek escape from everything that may be depressing or uncomfortably stir their slumbering conscience. It is an ideal which has haunted the dreams of thinkers of all ages who do not only deal in philosophical abstractions, but are concerned with vital problems of mankind, present and future. They form a respectable procession, if we recall only their names: Plato, Bacon, More, Campanella and so on until we reach Montegazza's "Year 5000," which more nearly approaches a realizable Utopia of to-day than any other known to the writer. But Barbusse is only pointing to the rotten spots of the present foundations of our society and so far merely suggests the form his dream may take.

The first part of the book adds new and valuable material to the voluminous literature voicing the louder and louder protest against war. Half a century ago Bertha von Suttner's "Ground Arms!", a dramatic echo of the Prussian-Austrian war of 1866, accomplished more in molding public sentiment than all the publications and conferences of the Peace Society, because her story brought home to every man and woman the tragedy of war. Some twenty years later Franz Adam Beyerlein shocked the patriotic German, ready at a moment's notice to don his uniform and fight for "Gott and Vaterland," by exposing abuses in barrack life in his story, "Jena—oder Sedan?" The mild and remote suggestion that a future war might bring a Sedan to Germany was indignantly censured by reviewers of the book. Has it occurred to them since that it was a prophecy? But those stories were after all only a protest against the spirit of militarism and the effects of war. They do not compare with Barbusse's crass pictures of the horrors of warfare. Born of the burning indignation in his soul during the Great War, "Le Feu" as no other book before it roused the nations of the world to the realization that "war is hell."

The sketches in the "Faits Divers," collectively entitled "La Guerre," record authentic occurrences of a character which perhaps no other human pen has dared to describe. The second group deals with happenings in the Balkans, the Inferno of Europe, especially Rumania. "Pendant que nous fêtions la paix" recalls the massacre of the Jews of Proskourov by the Cossack Petloura, which was avenged by Samuel Schwarzbrod, when he met the monster in Paris. Another group begins with the story of our lowest humane schoolmaster in a village in Spain, gives an instance of the sins committed in the name of civilization, or rather colonization, in Africa, an example of American misconduct in Mexico, offers what purports to be the true story of Tulsa, and culminates in a warm tribute to the little French schoolmistress, who was the soul of the Paris Commune, Louise Michel.

Before the publication of these sketches, Barbusse had written two books which proved him an amazingly thorough student of the history of Jesus Christ: "Jésus," and "Les Judas de Jésus." He refers to them in "L'Exploité," a condensed version of his story of Christ, at the end of the present volume. He says:

> Since some years I have tried to discern *through the veils of mystic traditions and fictions* the real image of this great *pasant.* (There is no adequate equivalent for this term in English.) I studied thoroughly all the books of the saints who dealt with his ideas and his personality. I followed with pious pursuit of truth the work of scholars, honest, rational, and independent, who have exhumed the origins of Christianity as archæologists exhume the ruins of Thebes or of Troy. I conceived in my sincerity and reverence for truth the audacious idea of writing a gospel, which I call the "Gospel of Restitution" because it renders to Jesus His poor sublime rôle, and to men their true greatness, which religion had taken from them.

Thus Barbusse introduces his brief resumé of the life and meaning of Christ, as he understood and interprets them from his viewpoint in the light of his studies on the subject. He proves himself a scholar who has delved deep into the past to show the present what the message of the Crucified means for the future. No one can doubt the reverence with which he approaches his task. There is not a trace in his treatment of Christ of that cheap play to the gallery which characterizes the work of the German biographer, whose books are enjoying such a curious vogue in America at present. Barbusse is proof, that one does not need to profess any creed to be deeply religious, which after all means nothing but to be earnestly and honestly concerned with the spiritual meaning of life. That brief sketch is likely to stimulate the desire to read his two books on Jesus.

In looking back from them to his first two works, the poems under the title "Pleureuses," and the novel "Les Suppliants," one is struck by the distance which separates them. Through what conflicts and crises of the soul must Barbusse have passed on that long, long road. Yet how logical is the thread that has led him through the labyrinth he has traveled!

The annals of Spanish America have been receiving increasing attention of late, and to former chronicles is now added a new work in the form of the first volume of Roberto Levillier's "Nueva Cronica de la Conquista del Tucuman" (Madrid: Sucesores de Rivadeyra). The book covers the first phase of the conquest of Tucuman, bringing the account down to the date of the definitive separation of the province from Chile. It is fully documented and lavishly illustrated.

There has been much interest among archæologists and historians in the discoveries of the Swedish archæological expedition to Greece in the cemetery at Dendra reports of which have appeared in various journals. The leader of the expedition, Professor A. W. Persson has now issued a little volume, "Kungagraven i Denra" (Stockholm: Bonnier), intended not for the scholar but for the layman, outlining the methods and results of his mission.

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Points of View

Explanation

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*
Sir:

My critics in your issues of June 21st and July 23rd deserve a word of acknowledgment and of explanation. In the first place, this was by no means a self-imposed task. I had submitted to my publishers a complete anthology of Eastern poetry, including translations from nearly all of the Eastern peoples that have produced any—I even found in my researches some ancient Egyptian poetry not of much literary value, but very curious—under the title of "The Book of the East," which I had personally much faith in. It was returned to me in these terms: "This is not just what we would like. What we want is a book of Chinese and Japanese poetry—about 325 selections—say 400 pages."

Those were the terms under which I went to work, and my researches were necessarily confined by a lack of financial resources (I made the book out of advances of $20, $25 and up to $50, out of the $500 I received for the entire book—the final payment of $150 was made in six monthly instalments! The edition, 1,000 copies at $7.50, sold out in somewhat less than a year to New York City. I went to Columbia and found there a fairly representative collection—for America at least. The New York Public Library, my only other resource, yielded but a very few volumes. I had not been at work a month before I had quite made up my mind that from the standpoint of my own critical judgment the task I had been set was practically impossible. But I had been bid to put my taste in my vest-pocket—so to speak—by the decree of my publishers—an anthology not for the critical, but good enough for the general reader. Allowing for many pages that to my own personal taste were simply banal, in both the Chinese and Japanese sections, I succeeded in finally getting together 210 pages of text—as the book stands. The whole performance simply begs the question of criticism of any concise character. It was to be a book of a size to attract the general reader, something that for the first time might lay claim to a certain comprehensiveness. And that was all. This statement will cover the different spellings of the same poet's name—the different renderings from the Shi-King, etc. Mr. Waugh makes the point that "poems from the Shi-King are credited partly to this collection and partly to "Unknown." To this I simply answer that I included these latter poems, and they are very few indeed—hardly worth of remark—on their apparent merits as being more or less worthy of space. Again, he remarks that "one poem from the Shi-King is included on pages 48, 95, and 118, under three separate titles, each appearing in a separate place in the index. At least three poems are given in two different renderings on different pages and under different titles and separately." I can only answer that conceive the slight difference in the spelling my meddling with his title—of course—and that I was glad enough to find the "three poems in two separate renderings," even though they were under different titles. A difference in renderings is always surely a joy to the maker of any poetical anthology from a foreign tongue. Again, as to nomenclature I felt sure that anybody with the intelligence and the price would readily conceive the slight difference in the spelling of the same poet's name.

There are a few misprints in the book—a rather unusual piece of proof-reading—but the one "grand and glorious" error seems to have quite escaped all of my reviewers with the exception of the inimitable Arthur Waley, who pounced upon it at once. In my anxiety to fill my pages—and fulfil my publishers' dictum—I included the work of one "Pai-Ta-Shun" among the original translators of the Chinese. Now this is simply the *nom de chinois* of Dr. Frederick Peterson, a well-known specialist of West 50th Street, New York City, who has made more than one journey to the Flowery Kingdom. I found his little book—printed in China—in the New York Public Library and somehow from that circumstance jumped to the conclusion that he was "the real thing"—a bona fide translator.

May heaven and all the Powers protect me from the consequences of such a primal error as this! Even the existence of Dr. Peterson was quite unknown to me, until after the book was published, when I called on him with due apology. "Pai-Ta-Shun" is simply a play on his own honest patronymic of Peterson.

By the way, Arthur Waley, to whom the Herald-Tribune sent the book in London, appears to be the only one of my critics who frankly conceived it from my own standpoint—a popular work—and treated it as such, albeit with full praise for its virtues, such as they are, for which, as he is the one ultimate authority, he has my everlasting gratitude.

I will only add that the book was compiled without the slightest help from any living soul. I had looked forward to submitting my work to Dr. Thomas H. Carter, the head of the Chinese Department of Columbia, the only available genuine authority—but he returned from a year's leave on sick absence only to die within two weeks in New York City (September, 1926).

JOSEPH LEWIS FRENCH.
New York City.

"The Mouse"

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
Sir:

A few years ago I enjoyed reading in *Harper's Magazine* a short story entitled "A Singapore Day." It fascinated me so much that I re-read it several times since, and now cannot help writing to tell you how much it pleased me. So vivid were the descriptions of scenes in Singapore, that to read them was like viewing a charming collection of water-colors painted on the spot. Now that's the sort of thing that makes a story worth-while—the fact that it takes the reader into some pleasant phase of life that would otherwise lie outside his experience. Furthermore, the *story interest* was so ably sustained by (1) suspense, (2) plot and (3) an unexpected twist at the end, that in my estimation "A Singapore Day" deserves to rank as a short-story masterpiece.

Since then I read another short story that pleased me just as well. Entitled "The Mouse," it had been reprinted from some obscure periodical of whose very existence I had been unaware. In its particular way "The Mouse" was as meritorious as "A Singapore Day." Its pictures of a phase of human nature was as vivid as Mr. Tomlinson's human pictures of the exotic scenes of Asia. I felt the emotions of the principal character just as strongly in one story as I caught the physical features of the tropical town in the other.

All credit to the editors of *Harper's* for having printed "A Singapore Day." But they certainly missed a lot of credit when they failed to print "The Mouse."

ROGER SPRAGUE

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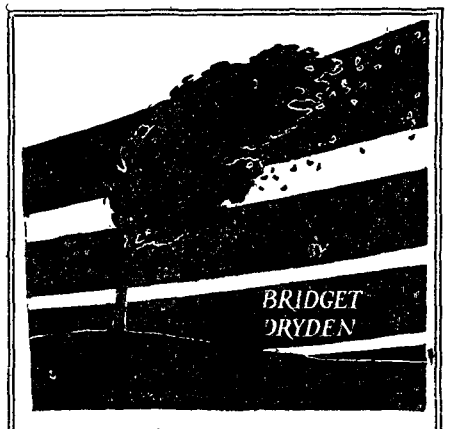

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The Wits' Weekly

Conducted by EDWARD DAVISON

Competition No. 42. A prize of fifteen dollars is offered for the best Lines on Receiving an X-Ray Photograph of Him- (or Her-) self. (Entries should reach the *Saturday Review* office, 25 West 45th St., New York, not later than the morning of September 24.)

Competition No. 43. A prize of fifteen dollars is offered for the best short poem called "A Dog's Death." (Entries should reach the *Saturday Review* office not later than the morning of October 8.)

Attention is called to the rules printed below.

THE FORTIETH COMPETITION

The prize of fifteen dollars offered for the Coolest Song for a Very Hot Day has been divided between Tom Henry and Elizabeth Wray.

THE PRIZE SONGS

I

O LIE low Tom Collins, the heat lowers o'er thee
And stifling the air that poor mortals must breathe;
The sun on the tin roofs in rage searches for thee
To suck thy sweet vapours and make thy heart seethe.
Where heat cannot reach thee nor torrid waves bleach thee
Ah, dainty refreshment, have thee no care;
With thick walls behind thee, at six I shall find thee
So cool in the cubes of my new Frigidaire.

TOM HENRY

II

The sun shone down in frozen rays
That shattered on the street,
While other people struggled through
What they considered heat.
I wondered how the grass could spring
So green from frozen sod,
After you passed me by with just
That distant little nod.

ELIZABETH WRAY.

I dislike dividing the prizes in these competitions. This time, however, I had to do so for nobody wrote a song that deserved the whole award. Most of the competitors seemed to think that the easiest way to write a cool song was to make as many references as possible to ice, the Arctic, frigidaire, and iced tea. Marshall Brice was the best of these and Alice M. Dowd and Claudius Jones also deserve mention. The last wrote one of the few really singable "songs" of the week.

Come where snaps the ice-sheathed twig,
Snowshoe-crushed, the snow-crust crunches.
Fence-pole wears a powdered wig
Fence-rail, icicles in bunches.
On the drift-caressing ski
Climb and slide and leap with me.

Knife-like cuts the northern flaw
Roaring down from wind swept summit.
Musk-rat cap and mackinaw
Scarcely takes the keenness from it.
On the drift—etc.

Then we'll seek a cabin out,
Where from Winter's blast it cowers,
Light a log and round about
Sing a song of summer flowers.
On the drift—etc.

Excepting the refrain, I liked this. But it might just as pertinently have been called Song for a Very Cold Day.

Other singable entries were strangely few. Who could possibly lift his voice to such a typical verse as the following?

Oh mighty crystal avalanche
That burieth the giant tree
Will'st embalm in thy snowy housing?
In cold storage would I be.
Like a clam or slippery oryster, let me bed myself in thee.

—though to be sure there is a hint of a famous hymn tune in the last line. Whatever merits this has are not those of song; and the same could be said of many a better entry this week. Homer Parsons spoiled his rather slight effort with a banal chorus. I quote only the verses of his "Warble of the Movie Fan."

The mountains and the beach are hot;
Upon the street you're fried.
Oh, how much cooler is the lot
Of those who sit "inside!"
When I am dead, and all the days
Are hot as this below,
Oh what a refuge from the blaze
Gehenna's Picture Show.

This and one set of the prize-winning verses offered a welcome relief from the overwhelming number of ice-box songs (or would-be songs) of which Miriam Teichner's was one of the briefest and best.

I wish I were a quart of milk.
I ask for nothing greater
Than standing quiet all day long
In the refrigerator.
I wish I were a quart of cream.
There's nothing I could dream of
Would give me more intense delight
Then being made ice-cream of.

But this kind of thing, even when it is very well done, can scarcely be called ambitious. Too many competitors took the same line of least resistance and thus a good theme was more or less wasted. Tom Henry alone made me feel thirsty; but he should know that the most cooling of all drinks in very hot weather is hot tea. Elizabeth Wray shares the prize with him more because of her originality then her success in saying what she had to say.

We print some verses held over from a recent competition.

AFTER A. E. HOUSMAN

I

The young man often wonders,
What is it to be old?
The old men try to tell him
But still it stays untold.
He never finds it written,
He never hears it sung,
Till to the same tune goes it—
What was it to be young?

JOHN F. DOUGHTY

II

The sunrise gilds the selfsame peak,
The moss still paves the glen;
What is it now I vainly seek
That came unbidden then?
The mirror of the lazy stream
Still catches cloud and sky
But either I have lived a dream
Or mirrors learn to lie.
The dust is deep upon the way
My bare, brown feet once trod
But gold's not in the dust today
Along the path I plod.
The lark still whistles from the Wheat,
The pines grow tall and true,
Above the brook the alders meet—
But where's the land I knew?

DALNAR DEVENING

RULES

Competitors failing to comply with the following rules will be disqualified. Envelopes should be addressed to Edward Davison, *The Saturday Review of Literature*, 25 West 48th Street, New York City. All MSS. must be legible—typewritten if possible—and should bear the name or pseudonyon of the author. Competitors may offer more than one entry. MSS. cannot be returned. The Editor's decision is final and *The Saturday Review* reserves the right to print the whole or part of any entry.

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The New Books

The books listed by title only in the classified list below are noted here as received. Many of them will be reviewed later.

Belles Lettres

THE OPEN CONSPIRACY. By *H. G. Wells.* Doubleday, Doran. $2 net.

SHAKESPEARE. By *Nathan Kaufman.* Dobsevage, 11 West 42nd St., New York. $2.

THE GHOST EPIGRAMS OF OSCAR WILDE. Covici-Friede.

BEOWULF AND EPIC TRADITION. By *William Witherle Lawrence.* Harvard University Press. $3.50.

THEODORE HOOK AND HIS NOVELS. By *Myron F. Brightfield.* Harvard University Press. $4.

SHAKESPEARE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. By *D. Nichol Smith.* Oxford University Press. $2.

THE THOUGHT BROKER. By *Samuel McChord Crothers.* Houghton Mifflin.

Biography

THE BALLOON BUSTER, Frank Luke of Arizona. By NORMAN S. HALL. Doubleday, Doran. 1928. $2.

Frank Luke's place among the immortal aviators of the war is with Rickenbacker, Boelcke, Richthofen, Nungesser, Guynemer, beneath all of whom, due to the brevity of his career as a combat flyer, he ranks in number of victories scored. When he was killed in September, 1918, just nine days of actual air fighting had been his lot, yet in that short period he destroyed fourteen enemy observation balloons and four planes, a record which, given the same length of time to equal it, was never approached by any aviator. But like Napoleon, Luke tried to do too much. In character an arrogant individualist of the highest physical courage, with a preference for fighting "solitaire," he often flouted orders by going up alone and accomplishing some of the most dazzling triumphs ever won in the air. It is a startling fact that while Luke was in the thick of his last, epic battle the command for his arrest was in transit from the superior who, in spite of the youth's insubordination, recommended him for the D.S.C. Luke died heroically in action, his last conquests three balloons, and it required eight enemy planes and ground batteries to bring him, still unsubdued in his crippled plane, to earth. Then, mortally wounded he fought attacking infantry until a final shot killed him. This was a man! Mr. Hall's story of Luke's short life is capably told for the most part, but excessive space is given to idealizing Luke's boyhood days, which are of no particular interest to the majority of readers.

ADVENTURES IN ALASKA AND ALONG THE TRAIL. By WENDELL ENDICOTT. Stokes. 1928. $5.

This is a picture-book, and if its hundred and fifty-eight illustrations are not "remarkable" as the jacket insists, they are interesting and in a few instances beautiful. The narrative is school-boyish and exceeded in amateur artlessness only by the plan of the book, which, not content with polishing off Alaska, throws in the Canadian Rockies for make-weight, with the Restigouche, the Pendleton Round-up, and a Bahia fishing trip in addition.

CONTEMPORARIES OF MARCO POLO. Edited by MANUEL KOMROFF. Boni & Liveright. 1928. $3.50.

This is one of the volumes in Liveright's "Black and Gold Library" which has already included, "The Travels of Marco Polo" by the same editor, as well as Brillat-Savarin's "The Physiology of Taste," "The Golden Ass of Apuleius", and other classics. The present narratives are, of course, partly to be found in Hakluyt's voyages, the texts of the Hakluyt Society, and the Bohn Library, but Mr. Komroff gives full acknowledgement to all his sources, with a complete bibliography at the end of his volume. His introduction is lucid and interesting. His narratives, all in modern spelling, consist of the travel records in the Eastern Parts of the World of William of Rubruck (1253-1255), Carpini (1245-1247). Friar Odoric (1318-1330), and the Oriental Travels of Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela (1160-1173). Mr. Komroff spent the greater part of a year in Europe collecting the material for his volume. He consulted many original manuscripts and documents. He has assembled his material in excellent form. Put this volume up alongside of his Marco Polo and you have a most fascinating record of early and glamorous exploration.

THE INTERPRETER GEDDES. By *Amelia Defries.* Horace Liveright. $3.

ST. THERESA. By *Mrs. Cecil Chesterton.* Doubleday, Doran. $2.50 net.

LIFE AND TIMES OF PIETER STUYVESANT. By *Hendrik Willem Van Loon.* Holt. $4.

THE LETTERS OF MARY NISBET. Arranged by *Lieut.-Col. Nisbet Hamilton Grant.* Appleton. $5.

FOUCHE. By *Nils Forssell.* Stokes. $4.

RICHELIEU. By *Karl Federn.* Translated by *Bernard Miall.* Stokes.

FROBISHER. By *William McFee.* Harpers. $4.

A HANGMAN'S DIARY. Edited by *Albrecht Keller.* Appleton. $3.50.

THE LIFE OF HASTINGS RASHDALL. By *P. E. Matheson.* Oxford University Press. $6.

BONNIE PRINCE CHARLIE. By *Donald Barr Chidsey.* Day.

OLD IRELAND. By *A. M. Sullivan.* Doubleday, Doran. $5 net.

TAMERLANE. By *Harold Lamb.* McBride. $4 net.

NAPOLEON AND HIS FAMILY. By *Walter Geer.* Brentano's. $5.

GEORGE SAND AND HER LOVERS. By *Francis Gribble.* Dutton. $5.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON. By *John A. Steuart.* Little, Brown. 2 vols. $4 net.

THE TRAVEL DIARIES OF WILLIAM BECKFORD. Houghton Mifflin. 2 vols.

THE DIARIES OF SYLVESTER DOUGLAS. Edited by *F. Francis Bickley.* Houghton Mifflin. 2 vols.

SHAPES THAT PASS. By *Julian Hawthorne.* Houghton Mifflin. $4.

MY FRIEND ROBISPIERRE. By *Henri Béraud.* Macaulay. $3.

TY COBB, THE IDOL OF BASEBALL FANDOM. By *Soerre O. Braathen.* Avondale.

THE STAR OF PICCADILLY. By *Lewis Melville.* Doubleday, Doran.

Drama

THE FRONT PAGE. By *Ben Hecht* and *Charles Macarthur.* Covici-Friede.

A GOOD PROVIDER. By *Elaine Sterne Carrington.* Appleton.

MON AMI PIERROT. By *Carroll Fitzhugh.* Houghton Mifflin. $2.

THREE LAST PLAYS. By *Lady Gregory.* Putnam. $2.

Economics

MAKING GOODS AND MAKING MONEY. By *Horace Taylor.* Macmillan. $2.50.

UNEMPLOYMENT OR WAR? By *Maurice Colbourne.* Coward-McCann. $3.

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION. By *Wilt Bowden.* Crofts. 65 cents.

Education

PROSE MODELS. Edited by *Edwin Long Beck* and *William Lucius Graves.* Heath.

PRINCIPLES OF SOCIOLOGY. By *Frederick E. Lumley.* McGraw-Hill. $3.

CABALLEROS Y ESCUDEROS. By *W. S. Hendrix* and *D. F. Porter.* University of Chicago Press. $1.50.

LECTURES INTRODUCTORIAS. By *Carlos Castillo.* University of Chicago Press. $1.50.

WHAT TO READ IN ENGLISH LITERATURE. By *Jack R. Crawford.* Putnam. $4.50.

Fiction

EARLY TO BED. By WOOD KAHLER. Knopf. 1928. $2.50.

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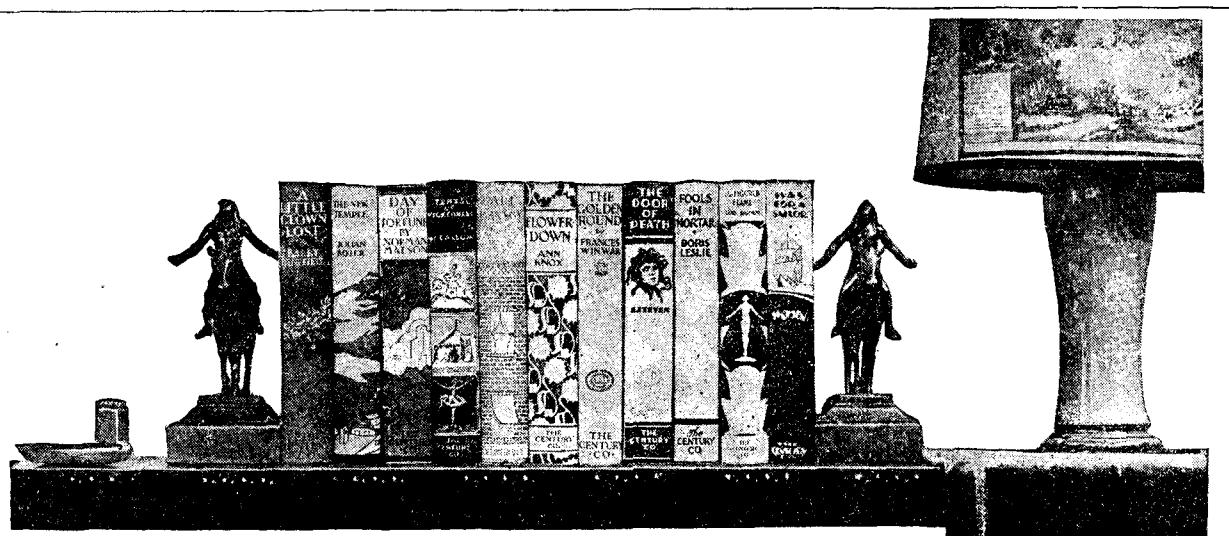
(*Continued on next page*)



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The New Books

Fiction

(*Continued from preceeding page*)

ously entangled with Olishga, a beautiful Russian, and her amazing entourage. The book is not ugly. It is charming and often most amusing, provided one does not sit in judgment upon its slightly insane and highly temperamental characters. The young American finally gets enough of all this continuous irresponsibility. An admirer of "Poor Richard's Almanac," to whose precepts he has given much heed in the past, he eventually wonders in desperation just what Benjamin Franklin would have done in this situation—and apparently gives it up. The author convinces us that there are no few such people as the fascinating Russian's camp-followers adrift in Paris. The story, naturally, has no great "significance". It presents exotic types, paints a scene of irritating glamour. As we have said, it is frankly light fiction, but rather deftly handled.

THE YOUNGEST ONE. By KATHARINE HAVILAND TAYLOR. Doubleday, Doran. 1928. $2.50.

Valette Breese, our rebellious, high-hatted, pseudo-sophisticated heroine, is the youngest of three daughters, the children of a clergyman with independent means, who is rector of a Pennsylvania small town church. We disliked the girl from the first, though we are expected to adore her, because her attitude toward herself, her family, her neighbors, her "sweeties," and the general scheme of life seemed to us the most preversely ridiculous we have met in a novel these many days. She has the notion fixed firmly in her conceited little head that she is quite too wonderful for the ordinary ways of this poor world, and she proceeds to carry out, with a shallow, selfish consistency, that delusion for a considerable period unchecked. Her two sisters marry advantageously and leave the parental roost, but Valette tarries longer at home while three of the local boys vainly court her.

One of these suitors, a spineless creature, far older than she, whom Valette has loved since her childhood, is restricted from marriage by his dependent women relatives. But several years after Valette has left home and achieved fame as a vaudeville singer, she and this man enjoy a week together in unwed bliss, with resultant motherhood for Valette of a short-lived babe. Nearly three hundred pages are required to reach that point in Valette's career, and the rest of the tale serves merely to bring about her expected marriage to a magnanimous, still constant lad from home. Portions of the story are skilfully written and pleasant reading, but they fail to compensate one for the grind of plodding through the whole book.

SHOW CASES. By JACQUES LE CLERCQ. Macy-Masius. 1928. $2.

Mr. Le Clercq, though somewhat precious, and dealing with sex quite frankly for sophisticated people, has learned from Maupassant, and he can tell a story and analyze a character with an air and in a cultivated manner. He deals with unusual women, chooses essentially tragic instances. He is extremely readable, even though a number of readers may jib at his material. The story of Rosalie Dwyer, for instance, deals with a peculiar type of virginity encountered in a way of living some might term loose, yet the story succeeds in being both tender and moving. It has strange beauty. "Helen White" deals with a repellant woman seen in repellant circumstances, but the description of her is grimly etched. If Mr. Le Clercq should commit himself to more than such character—or rather temperament—sketches, he gives promise in his stories of becoming a salient novelist. His interest seems at present to be in the bizarre among human beings. He is evidently not attracted to plain fare in human nature. The artist in him responds to the exotic, the faintly menacing, the extraordinarily ironic. But he has merits as a prose craftsman.

THE RUNAWAYS. By GEORGE A. BIRMINGHAM. Bobbs-Merrill. 1928. $2.

An unapparent heir-apparent furnishes the paradoxical *motif* for the paradoxical gayety of George A. Birmingham's latest novel, "The Runaways." This author can take a plot creaking at every artificial joint and so distribute it among characters who would make the land and sea much more amusing places if they ever *were* on them that the reader doesn't even mind the fact of East European politics once more appearing as the uniting or separating agency of bravery and beauty. All because it is Mr. Birmingham's enthusiastic reaction to life and his satiric comments thereon that make people read him—and people do read him. He has a tremendous appetite for life and is amused by his own appetite; the idiosyncracies of human nature delight him; and the ridiculous in close attendance upon the serious is the cream of his jest. It matters very little that in "The Runaways" a prospective bridegroom in attempting to escape his bride hides himself within a few yards of the lady who has betaken herself on a like quest from like motives; it is the Irish country and people they are surrounded by that intrigue the pen and heart of Mr. Birmingham and give him the opportunity to be as shrewdly nonsensical as he can be. That Mr. Birmingham is a canon in the Church of England some way adds a dash of seasoning to what was very well seasoned before.

THE MASTER OF REVELS. By RICHARD HOWELLS WATKINS. Doubleday-Doran. 1928. $2.

With a comparatively high type of mystery novel flooding the market today one is surprised to pick up a volume and find it to be neither more nor less than an elaboration of the old "dime thriller." An American aviator, stranded in England, takes the air in an attempt to right a great wrong and finds himself suddenly enmeshed in a hopeless web of crime. The action of the story, packed into three days, races with the unbelievable speed of a cinema "thriller" to an unusual climax.

Alan Clarke rescues a man from Pentonville prison. Supposedly a man unjustly held. After flying away with the fugitive he finds that he has been deceived. He has rescued the wrong man and instead of aiding Justice, as he had hoped, he has thwarted the blindfolded goddess. Hurtling defiance at The Master of Revels (the spider in the web) who has victimized him, Clarke sets out to right the wrong he has done. He is aided in his efforts by a blithe young Englishman who (strange situation to find in a mystery novel!) is not what he seems.

A very ordinary mystery novel, this will probably find some favor with crime story addicts. But it is not for the discriminating reader.

A STOIC AND OTHER STORIES. Caravan I. By *John Galsworthy*. Scribners. $1.25.

THE APPLE TREE AND OTHER STORIES. Caravan II. By *John Galsworthy*. Scribners. $1.25.

THE FIRST AND THE LAST AND OTHER STORIES. Caravan III. By *John Galsworthy*. Scribners. $1.25.

OTHER ARABIAN NIGHTS. By *H. L. Katibah*. Scribners. $2.

SCARLET HEELS. By *Edith M. Stern*. Horace Liveright. $2.50.

MRS. CONDOVER. By *John Metcalfe*. Boni & Liveright. $2.50.

THE NET AROUND JOAN INGILBY. By *A. Fielding*. Knopf. $2.

LAFCADIO'S ADVENTURES. By *André Gide*. Knopf. $2.50.

KUBEIK THE OUTLAW. By *Theodore Acland Harper*. Doubleday, Doran. $2 net.

HERE COMES AN OLE SAILOR. By *Alfred Cressider Sheppard*. Doubleday, Doran. $2 net.

THE TOP KICK. By *Leonard H. Nason*. Doubleday, Doran. $2 net.

CULLUM. By *E. Arnot Robertson*. Holt. $2.50.

USEFUL KNOWLEDGE. By *Gertrude Stein*. Payson & Clarke.

THE MASTER MYSTERY. By *Austin J. Small*. Doubleday, Doran. $2 net.

THE CLEVER ONE. By *Edgar Wallace*. Doubleday, Doran. $2 net.

THE SILK STOCKING MURDERS. By *A. Roger Sheringham Case*. Doubleday, Doran. $2 net.

THYRZA. By *George Gissing*. Dutton. $2.50.

FOOLS IN MORTAR. By *Doris Leslie*. Century. $2.

THE GOLDEN ROUND. By *Frances Winwar*. Century. $2.

REGINALD AND REGINALD IN RUSSIA. By *"Saki."* Viking. $1.75.

RISING WIND. By *Virginia Moore*. Dutton. $2.50.

THE SWINGING SHUTTER. By *C. Fraser-Simson*. Dutton. $2.

THE BISHOP'S WIFE. By *Robert Nathan*. Bobbs-Merrill. $2.

DAY'S END. By *H. E. Bates*. Viking. $2.

INEXHAUSTIBLE CUP. By *Ivan Shmelov*. Dutton. $2.

THE GALLANT CAME LATE. By *Marian Storm*. Putnam.

PASSION IS THE WIND. By *Bridget Dryden*. Day. $2.

TRENCK. By *Bruno Frank*. Knopf. $2.50.

DEFEAT. By *Ricarda Huch*. Knopf.

TEXAS MAN. By *William McLeod Raine*. Doubleday, Doran. $2 net.

THE DARK ISLAND. By *Charles Collins* and *Gene Markey*. Doubleday, Doran. $2 net.

WHEN THE TURTLES SING. By *Don Marquis*. Doubleday, Doran. $2 net.

ON SWEET WATER TRAIL. By *Sabea Conner*. Reilly & Lee.

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The Reader's Guide

CONDUCTED BY MAY LAMBERTON BECKER

Inquiries in regard to the selection of books and questions of like nature should be addressed to MRS. BECKER, c/o *The Saturday Review*.

O'CONNELL Street (formerly Sackville) was dressed with flags and flowers on the day we reached Dublin, and Æ. had just returned from the States with an honorary degree from Yale. The decorations, however, had been put up less to the glory of Irish letters than for Horse Show Week, climax of the Dublin season, and remained for Aonach Tailteann, the Tailteann Games then in progress, Olympian events going on all over the place, but for the most part in a stadium at the edge of the city. But we turned aside from the leaping and hurling at Croke Park and asked the way to Merrion Square, the Dublin address of Æ.

Merrion Square is a long green garden, enclosed on three sides by brown Georgian houses of great size and noble aspect. Where the sidestreets join it has begun to fray at the seams, but elsewhere its sober dignity holds firm: the brass-plates are those of prosperous doctors—the locality is a sort of Harley Street; old-established law firms, and societies learned and otherwise, while in a city of beautiful doorways like Dublin, the portals of Merrion Square are more than usually beautiful. The fourth side is taken by the National Museum and Leinster Lawn, where, on the day we came, the new plaque to Kevin O'Higgins waited unveiling on the temporary cenotaph to the heroes. Close by this you come upon Plunkett House, in which is lodged the *Irish Statesman*. According to M. J. Sullivan's pert guide-book, "So this is Dublin!" Plunkett House is distinguished from all the other houses by the fact that it is perpetually enveloped in a Celtic mist, and exudes, a slight, but not offensive, aroma of creamery butter. This adroit phrase calls up a notion of the practical idealism breathing from the place, and indeed on any subject at all, from James Joyce to the grading of eggs, advice and inspiration is continually at hand for a stream of seekers. But the true pilgrimage leads from the four quarters of the earth up four flights of its stairs to the room under the roof where "Æ." works—when the pilgrims will let him.

It is a wide room at the back, looking out on gray roofs and the tops of trees: all around its low walls slim brown goddesses look from dusky frescoes and muse above the mantlepiece. There are portraits and pencil-drawings—you recognize the men and women of the Northern Renaissance—and comfortable arm-chairs slightly sagging with hospitality, and a tea-table, and a typical editor's desk with such bookcases about it as should remind the conscience of a caller that "Æ." is after all a working journalist who must get the paper out on time, catch foreign mails, and even in the intervals let loose a masterpiece like "The National Being." All this, however, the visitor does not see till much later, for on the threshold stands "Æ." radiating welcome.

❧ ❧

No doubt many who read this will have seen "Æ." oftener than I have, in the States: they know how tall he is and how bushy his beard, how merry and kind his eyes behind their big glasses. He made me feel suddenly very young and happy, perhaps because when I was a little girl I had a beautiful Vermont uncle also six-foot-four with a brown bushy beard, looking so much like "Æ." that for a moment I slipped back into the state that lies about us in our infancy. But I think anyone would be likely to feel so in the presence of "Æ."; I was reminded of what his secretary had said that morning, one who has known him for thirty-five years, ever since he came up from the country a poor boy. "Want can't touch him," she said; "he's just as happy with a bit of bread and an apple and his little cup of coffee." No, nothing touches "Æ." in the sense of wounding or even disturbing him: not grief nor turmoil nor frustration nor any other creature—not because he has fled from the world, but because the world of reality in which he lives is like any proper fairy-land, not far-off, but invisible in this place among us.

I asked him about the new poets coming up to fill in the ranks, and he spoke of Pamela Travers and Frank O'Higgins and told me I must not take his word for it, he would read me some of their poems. So he burrowed out a bound volume of the *Statesman*, leaned back in his editorial chair, and began

—*O—break—her—heart—they—said*—

Quite possibly you who read this may have heard "Æ." read in public, but it is somehow different in this memory-haunted room. He reads in a rich, soft monotone, singing on all the vowels, the words falling so slowly they are like the notes of a great bell that keep humming till the wheel revolves and the clapper strikes again. Before the poem was over, and rather to the embarrassment of both of us, I had to wipe my eyes with a conspicuous white handkerchief. I am no easy weeper and this poem is not sad, but somehow one must be deeply moved at the first hearing of a new kind of music—a true gypsy band, for instance, or the strange cadences that accompany a No dance—and "Æ." reading poetry is a new kind of music.

Simone Téry flew in from France: she has written two books on Ireland in war and is now somewhat disconcerted to find her in anything so commonplace as peace. She rallied "Æ." on his inability to speak his beloved Irish with anything like fluency and he said he never pretended to do so, that he came to it too late in life, in spite of going through three instruction books, but he could recite it—and so he did, poem after poem, pure music. I suddenly caught "dheelish, dheelish" at the end of a first line and guessed I must be listening to the original of the verses that even in Ferguson's English translation remain the most endearing of love-songs, and so it proved to be. Altogether it was a great day, and after Mlle. Téry had flown on, "Æ." planned a walking tour for us in Sligo and drew me a map, and as I went out I collided with an earnest youth on the mat, who looked through me to his divinity on the threshold and gasped, blushing brightly, "I don't suppose you remember me, Mr. Russell, but——"

"Come in," said "Æ.", and held out a welcoming hand. He is not one to look over the shoulder of one guest toward the next, nor to let a pilgrim departing blur the welcome of a newcomer. It may be that he can keep the moment so self-contained and clear because he lives in eternity, which is, according to his poetry, an immortal moment.

❧ ❧

There was, however, one place to which I had resorted before Merrion Square. The boat train drew in at six o'clock and at six-fifteen I was in front of the Abbey Theatre, learning from the posters that there would be that night a double bill, "Riders to the Sea" and "The White-headed Boy," with Sara Allgood in both plays. The American visitor should be well warned in advance that the Abbey Theatre is a small place, else, having in mind the size of what has come out of it, he will be disappointed at anything less than the Coliseum. Its inside looks rather like a hall than a theatre: Padraic Colum's "The Road Round Ireland" (I took this priceless work all the way, even in a long walking-tour) says it has nine hundred seats, but at first sight one would not suppose so. There are a few rows of front stalls, but most of the audience is in the pit: there is a single narrow balcony, but as the room is much longer than it is wide, this makes a horseshoe of so inconvenient a shape that its sides might almost as well be in the street so far as seeing goes—though with the dictation and voices of this company hearing alone is worth more than in any other theatre. As all the side rows back of the first rise up and lean over at critical moments, the marvel is that no one takes a header into the action. The color scheme is black and pale cream touched with gold: the proscenium opening is like a plain black picture-frame with gold edges, and the curtain black with broad gold vertical stripes. By this time all America knows the Irish Players—especially Sara Allgood—by name and in person; what the visitor gets only here, however, is the extraordinary ensemble, the small stage—making plausible scenes in

(*Continued on next page*)

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"A touching rustic idyll, altogether human."—*Isabel Paterson in The New York Herald Tribune.*

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The Reader's Guide

(*Continued from preceding page*)

cabins, cottages, and tenement rooms—and the *entente* across the footlights. It may not always have been an *entente cordiale*, but surely never has an audience taken a keener and more personal interest in its own stage. It will stand in pelting rain in queus winding around the block, waiting for "Juno and the Paycock." If it likes to laugh better than to cry, so that when midway of that action O'Casey lets fall the comic mask and reveals the tragedy that has been all the time upon the stage, it must keep on laughing for half an act in spite of indignant hushings from subtler hearers, why, it's no wonder. This is no drawing-room audience: plenty of those in it are "ould front-top neighbors." I saw "Juno and the Paycock" acted in the States, but I never really saw it until it wrung my heart in Dublin.

Just around the corner is the Peacock Theatre, a blue-and-silver creation forming a try-out room for the school of acting attached to the Abbey, and here, all through the weeks of the Tailteann games (pronounced Tyletin as nearly as I can get it), companies of amateurs competed for prizes under the section of dramatic literature. It was worth hours of one's time to see these companies—village dramatic clubs and groups of weavers and workers from the cities—putting on play after play, heroic or folk-lore or rustic comedies like the immensely popular "Professor Tim," and acting in them so well that one more readily understands the rise and progress of the Abbey. Other than that, our chief drama in Dublin was listening to the landlady, for our little hotel had been raided by every army and faction, regular and irregular, from the Easter rising to the close of twenty-two, and new paint could not hide its wounds.

Padraic Colum had given me wonderful letters, and I used but two of them. This was really his fault, for he told me to go to Glendalough. I went for the day and spent almost all the rest of my time walking in Wicklow. We climbed Lugduff and came down the length of Pollanass waterfall; we went over Derrybawn and across Kirikee to Glenmalure and down by Ballinaclash to the Vale of Avoca; we turned from the steel-engraving prettiness of the Meeting of the Waters into the wild hills again, and walked at length as far south as Arklow and back to Woodenbridge: then we went northward again seeking Monasterboice and its ancient crosses, and walked for a time along meadows of county Louth. And then we came back to London: we had spent the nights wherever we chanced to meet nightfall, sometimes in well-appointed sportsmen's hotels, sometimes in tiny mountain inns, and everywhere we found courtesy and charm, tidy beds, and honest food. Sooner or later American tourists will find that Wicklow is really what it calls itself, "the Garden of Ireland", but as yet we saw not one bill-board in all the length of our Wicklow journey, nor a hot-dog stall, nor even a shouting petrol-pump by the roadside; only pearl-white cabins under thatch, piled peat on misty hilltops, dark fern and surges of purple heather.

H. C., Long Island, N. Y., asks for a book "leaning toward thought analysis and the power of right thinking to correct a tendency toward nervous insufficiency. . . . I do not want a book tied up with any cult or religious movement." Several correspondents have asked questions like this, and will please accept this reply.

"THOUGHT CONTROL in Everyday Life," by James Alexander (Funk & Wagnalls) is made up largely of direct advice on how to change one Emotion into another, how to get the mind off some things and concentrate it on others, and generally how to form and keep good mental habits. It is conservative, has a faint trace of Couë, but is in no way connected with that movement, and while it deals with health and illness, lays stress on the former. "About Ourselves: Psychology for Normal People," by H. A. Overstreet (Norton), gives lay readers an idea of what psychological research of the past fifty years has found out about them, to the end that they may the more intelligently try to govern themselves accordingly. Norton publishes several books of this general nature for the use of everyday men and women; the most widely known is the admirable "Psychology," by Everett Dean Martin, lectures in print that cover the field of our present knowledge of the mind in language adapted to the layman and do so quite as thoroughly as he will be likely to need.

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* *

Let us consider maps. One who has toured a-wheel with Bartholomew's reduced ordnance survey maps sits aghast at the travesties offered in most American products. In the first place, American maps are very poorly drawn, and worse printed; secondly, they take little or no note of any but the more important roads. It never seems to have occurred to our map makers that the better roads could be indicated by colors, and that the presence of all roads on the map might be of service to those who would explore the other roads—other roads which frequently offer far more attraction, and are perfectly good motor roads. I have in mind a very famous highway in New England, known far and wide as a scenic highway—and liberally commercialized with hot-dog stands, "gift shops," and gasoline stations. Now there is a well-made road forming a detour of some twenty-five miles through scenery as mountainous as one could wish, which isn't even so much as suggested by any guide book I know, and almost ignored by the map makers. All but one.

Some years ago the Michelin tire people got out what are by all odds the best maps for motoring which I know of in America. These maps are (or were, for they are now no longer issued, and lucky is the motorist who possesses one) brilliantly printed in colors, and show first and second class roads, and indicate every branch road leading off the main arteries. They were printed in France by French artisans, and are superb in every way. With one of these maps one may not only find the best and shortest way, but, too, a good many of the more attractive and less frequented roads. I commend these Michelin maps to motorists who are still human beings—but I shall not tell you where that detour of which I have just spoken is: for on a recent expedition thither no automobile was seen for fifteen miles, no speed maniac "cut in," no solitary stand offered hot dogs, no useless trinkets were offered for sale by road-side pagodas, no infinitude of black road stretched out before us.

* *

A printer friend suggests that the only properly named motor guide is "Mixer's" —and there is something to be said for the rather well-printed maps of that little pocket-sized publication. But nothing fit to be said can be written about the bulky agglomerations of advertisements and trunk-line information which make up the usual polychrome road guides. Perhaps motorists get what they want in such volumes, but compared with what might be accomplished by disinterested intelligence, skilful, accurate, complete map making, and the integrity of Baedeker, they not only get very little for a dollar, but nowhere can they buy, for any price, the kind of guide book which ought to be available.

R.

A Collector's Fate

By DAN RIDER

FEW callings in life present more opportunities for interesting adventures than that of the second-hand bookseller. The Roosevelts and the Rosenbachs, and the antiquarian booksellers, who scour the deserts and outlying places for rarities, continually bag choice specimens by lucky flukes and after exciting contests. But the man with the little bookshop round the corner often sees more of the fun than his bigger brethren.

Some years ago I had a little second-hand bookshop round the corner, and one day a woman called upon me with a number of autographs for sale. It was an astonishing collection of letters and documents. Some of them had been written or signed by Byron, Browning, Carlyle, George Washington, Mark Twain, Bret Harte, and Harriet Beecher Stowe. They looked quite genuine. The paper was of the period, and the ink was old and faded.

I asked her what she wanted for them, and to my surprise she said she would take ten shillings for the lot. At once I thought they must be stolen, as they looked honestly worth several pounds.

I inquired whether they were her property and where she had obtained them. Quietly she replied they had belonged to her husband, who used to collect old letters. He was a medical man, and had recently died. Collecting autographs was one of his hobbies, and she had a quantity more at home. She had an air of quiet refinement and was neatly dressed in black, and she seemed to fit in with the story. Eventually I agreed to give her ten shillings upon account if she would leave her name and address, and she promised to bring the remainder of the letters during the day, when I would make her a price for them all.

All day I waited for her in vain, and I wondered why she did not return. What possible reason could she have for not keeping her word? . . . Gradually a haunting feeling that they had been stolen crept over me with increasing intensity, and would not be shaken off. She was evidently suspicious that my liberal offer was a trap set to catch her; so the next afternoon, in order to solve the mystery, I made a journey to the address she had given in the New Kent Road. . . . To my astonishment I found it was empty. Nothing daunted, I made inquiries of the neighbors, only to learn that the house had been unoccupied for a considerable time, and that no doctor had ever lived there, and no person of the name I sought was known in the locality.

The false address made the transaction so distasteful to me that I put the letters away in a desk to await developments. There they lay forgotten for about a twelvemonth, when one day they were called to mind by a stranger inquiring if I knew where he could find an autograph letter of Lord Byron.

He was an American passing through London, and he explained that his wife's pet hobby was visiting the homes and haunts of Byron and collecting souvenirs of the poet. To-morrow chanced to be her birthday, and he had slipped out of the hotel, unknown to her, to buy her a birthday present, and if that present could possibly take the form of a Byron letter, he assured me that both of them would be "tickled to death." . . .

Thereupon I produced my Byron letter, and handed it to him for his inspection. He carefully examined it back and front, tested the texture of the paper, and held it up to the light to see if it bore any water-mark. Then he read it aloud several times, enjoying the rhythm of its

(*Continued on next page*)

We reprint the following from an article entitled "The Great George Washington Fraud" which appeared in the August, 1927, issue of *Blackwood's Magazine.*

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(*Continued from preceding page*)

periods, and finally, with evident satisfaction, inquired the price. . . .

"You can have it for ten shillings, the price I paid," I said. "If, however, you find it not to be genuine, bring it back and I will return your money. Like Byron, there is a bit of a mystery about this letter, and I should like to fathom it."

Upon this understanding the letter changed hands. Several weeks elapsed, and as I heard no further news of it, my interest in the other letters began to revive. The comparison of Browning's signature with those in some books purchased at the sale of his library was most satisfactory, and assisted to eliminate from my mind any doubts I had entertained about the genuineness of the collection. But my enthusiasm was destined to receive a shock, for within a few days of its rebirth in walked the American, this time accompanied by his wife.

"I have come back, you see, to keep my bargain with you. And here is your Byron letter," said he, in a manner that perplexed me by its excessive cheerfulness.

Before I could find words to reply, he went on smilingly—

"This letter is a terrible fraud. Perhaps I should say a magnificent fake. I am not going to return it to you; I intend to keep it. And both my wife and I have called in to thank you for the unexpected pleasure you have been the means of giving us during the past few weeks. You have unknowingly turned my holiday from a failure into a success. I was getting fed up, as my wife will tell you, with walking in Bryon's footsteps, seeing places where he ate, and where he slept, and where he was supposed to have lived. But this letter has changed all that feeling. It has supplied just that dash of devilment without which anything concerning Byron must always fall flat. Your doubt as to its authenticity led us to consult the experts at the British Museum. They shrugged their shoulders, and screwed up their mouths, and shook their heads at it. But they fascinated us with a sight of many letters they knew to be genuine. We were told that this letter had been offered to them many times. It was always turning up like a bad penny, and was thought to be a copy of a letter in some private collection. The Museum authorities were kindness itself, and from them we gleaned the names of some private Byron enthusiasts. To these we wrote, and they invited us to come and view their collections, and they made us very welcome. Through you we have met some most charming people, and have seen some wonderful treasures of which otherwise we should never have heard."

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THE PHOENIX NEST

BACK again at the old stand! We knew we were going to begin this column in that manner. It is hardly, we know, to express oneself originally. But we have been out of practice now for over a month. Moreover, perusing the work that *The Substitute Phoenician* accomplished in our absence, we are lost in admiration, and feel that the S. P.'s stuff is so much better than ours that there is really no excuse for our being. . . .

One bit of news we bring you that is authentic. We understand that in our absence *The New York Evening Post* printed a garbled and alarming version of an accident sustained by the poet and novelist, *Elinor Wylie*. The truth was alarming enough, but for the sake of her many friends and readers we wish actually to state it. First, to relieve their minds, we can say that the dangerous fracture of her backbone seems now completely to have knit and healed. Any injury to the backbone, however, involves the nervous system. Elinor Wylie has been suffering much from severe neuritis as a result and is recovering physical energy slowly. She is, however, quite able to walk about and take mild exercise. . . .

The accident happened toward the end of June. The poet had greatly enjoyed the spring and early summer in England, she was writing what may prove to be the best poetry of her career, she had liked seeing many English and American friends. She was in excellent spirits. On a visit near Henley-on-Thames she was descending the main staircase. The steps curved, were highly polished, and uneven, as this was an old English house. She was hurrying to speak to her hostess who was in the garden. She slipped and fell a flight. The result was a complete fracture of the lower part of the back-bone. In spite of the most extreme pain that evening, and a sleepless night, Elinor Wylie took the train back to London the next day. She traveled up alone in a third-class carriage. She telephoned for a physician recommended by a friend, and the next day went to have an ex-ray taken. This revealed the complete fracture. She was confined to her bed for over a month in very great pain. Her friends need not be assured of her fortitude. Her husband was to arrive in England at the end of July to spend with her his month's vacation. To save his anxiety she sent him no word of the accident and commanded any American friend who knew of it not to reveal it. The first word of it that he heard was after his arrival at her London house at Cheltenham Terrace, Chelsea. She was then able to be up and even to go to meet him at Waterloo Station. Shortly after his arrival they left London to spend the time of his vacation on the Thames. . . .

The erectness of Elinor Wylie's carriage, a characteristic also of her spirit, has not been impaired in any way. The shock to her nervous system has, however, been severe. She is not returning from England until November, meanwhile intending to settle down quietly either in the country or in London in order to begin a new novel. During the late Spring and Summer, in spite of her accident, she has written enough poetry for a new volume. It is perhaps worthy of note that her physician expressed himself as amazed at her ability to bear physical suffering. Lovers of literature, and of the spirit that makes true literature, can only thank Providence for the fortunate escape from permanent injury of a noble character. . . .

Alexander Findlay McClintock of Jockie Glen (we suspect a pseudonym) is agitated over the Substitute Phoenician's recent reference to *Carolyn Wells* as one who has written *some* detective stories of her own in her day, and burst forth as follows:

TO CAROLYN WELLS

Adulatory Lines

"Don't wait until I've flopped to throw the greens!"—Anacreon.

Hail! to the star who scattered into flight
An hundred stars the World considered bright.
Before SHE took the field
Those jejunes fancied they could write!
When She appeared, they who stood there before
The Sanctum, saying "We are at the Door!"
Perceiving it quite useless to remain,
At once departed, and returned no more.

Before the earliest Morning Stars were seen
We heard Her, singing in each Magazine;
Nor was an Index worth a Sou Markee
Wherein her Name, each issue, had not been.

When New Year issues something Light desired,
She, god-like, into Solitude retired:
"Let there be Light!" she said, and straight
There was as much as the demand required.

Wine is a Mocker, it was writ,
Some don't approve that thought a little bit;
But if Bright Mockery be Wine, then She
Of the Supreme Falernian is It!

Some blew, no doubt, a more Hyperian oat;
Some in the chill Atlantic cleared their throat;
But few inspired more frequent drafts, or drew
On any bank a longer or a greener note.

Ah, when from Stygian glooms we view this Spot,
Where Some of Us Made Good, and Some did Not,
Bright Persiflage we never shall forget,
Though We, ourselves, Forever be Forgot.

We stand corrected. . . .

Having had *Wyndham Lewis*, the painter, novelist, critical writer, philosopher, and author of many trenchant books, notably the most recent Part One of "The Childermass",—having had this prodigy already in our midst in the Summer,—New York is now welcoming a different Wyndham Lewis, namely *D. Bevan Wyndham Lewis* who wrote "François Villon" (the Literary Guild's September selection), and is a columnist on the *London Express*. He is, quite properly, making his headquarters at the Hotel Wyndham, where a columnist luncheon was recently given in his honor. . . .

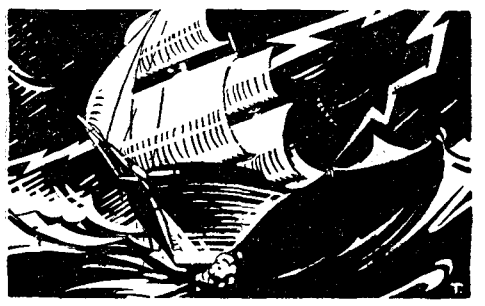
Mrs. F. H. Winterburn, the editor, author, and lecturer, is resuming her courses in French and in "Self Expression through Writing and the Short Story Art" at the Hotel Albert, at Eleventh Street and University Place. Her terms are moderate and the time of the lessons she gives is arranged to suit her pupils. A long residence in Paris has enabled her to be of practical help to Americans in the swift acquisition of conversational and literary French without unnecessary preliminaries. Pupils have testified to the practical value of her teaching of creative writing. Appointments are to be made in the mornings by telephoning Stuyvesant 4961. . . .

The latest "stunt" in books concerning crime has been achieved in "*Murder,*" by *Evelyn Johnson* and *Gretta Palmer*, recently published by Covici, Friede, Inc. In this book are thirty-two crimes, with the solutions in a sealed envelope at the back of the volume. The stories are said to be perfect miniature detective-stories. . . .

We thank *Father Will Whalen* for sending us the copies of *Oscar Wilde's* plays and *Elinor Macartney Lane's* novel of 1910, "Mills of God." He perceives a striking resemblance between the plot and crucial incident of the Lane novel and that of Wilde's "A Woman of No Importance." At a casual glance at certain pages, he seems to have something to go on. But that is the most we can say. Father Whalen, who hails from Orrtanna, Pennsylvania, learned grammar, he says, from the late *Father Tabb* who taught from "Bone Rules; Skeleton of English Grammar." Once Father Tabb, handy with pencil or chalk, drew his own profile on the blackboard and wrote his epitaph beneath it as follows, for the benefit of his pupils.

Here lies the old fool
That taught us at school
To keep the Bone Rule.
. . . . O Lord, keep him cool!

THE PHOENICIAN



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The New Books

Government

(*Continued from page* 130)

PRIMARY ELECTIONS. By CHARLES E. MEERIAM *and* LOUISE OVERACKER. University of Chicago Press. 1928. $3.

The changes of twenty years fully justify—demand, rather—a new edition of Professor Merriam's book on primary elections. Within that period has developed the most conspicuous and influential example of these elections—the Presidential primary. If the new edition is useful as a reference work, since it brings the history of the direct primary in the various States up to date, it is equally valuable for its weighing of the arguments for and against the institution.

Professor Merriam's keenness and knowledge of actual political conditions are exhibited in the way he demolishes the popular arguments against the direct primary and brings out the real difficulties in its operation. There is the contention that the direct primary fosters the demagogic type of candidate. In reply, Professor Merriam reminds the objector that abundant illustration of the same type can be found in the working of the convention system. An argument which is more vigorously urged is that the direct primary tends to weaken party responsibility. Here again the objector forgets history. In Dr. Merriam's words, "there have been insurgents of various types ever since Congress convened, and they have appeared under all systems: the direct primary, the delegate convention, and the old-time legislative caucus." There have also been agricultural blocs, tariff blocs, Southern blocs and so on. "But none of these have any relation to a specific type of nominating system; nor did they ever have." Senator Gorman's successful defiance of President Cleveland on the issue of tariff reform struck a heavy blow at party responsibility, but the convention system, which is praised as nourishing party responsibility, was helpless to deal with the situation.

But what of the scandalous expenditure of money under the primary system? It is a bit peculiar that this question should be asked in view of the scandals which have arisen in many a convention. We know much more about expenditures in primaries than we know about expenditures related to conventions. Mr. Hughes once pointed out that if there is an active contest for a nomination, the expense will be about as great under the convention system as in a primary. Dr. Merriam scores a palpable hit when he notes that in the Illinois and Pennsylvania Senatorial primaries of 1926 the candidate on whose behalf the largest amount was spent did not win in either contest and in both contests the truth came out, as it would not have done in nominations made by conventions. Presidential primaries present some special problems, part of which would be solved if these primaries were more general, so that candidates might run in a much larger number of States with a resulting reduction in the number of unpledged and "favorite son" delegations.

A POLITICAL HANDBOOK OF THE WORLD. Edited by MALCOLM W. DAVIS and WALTER H. MALLORY. Published by Harvard University Press and Yale University Press for the Council on Foreign Relations. 1928.

This book is not literature. It is merely useful.

In the mass of "literature" which is being published in this country on international affairs and our relations with other countries, the homekeeping American is easily lost. A foreign government in Andorra, or Tegucigalpa, or Bhutan does something, a Minister of State in Lithuania, or Patagonia, or Afghanistan makes a pronouncement, or the Toulouse *Times*, or the Guadalajara *News*, or the Paotingfu *Despatch* editorializes—and the American reader, unless he be marvelously informed, simply cannot become interested, because he has no idea who is speaking or why.

A guidebook to foreign news was essential. The Council on Foreign Relations has appropriately undertaken the task of supplying one. In handy volume of less than two-hundred pages has been collected and tabulated the necessary data on all the governments, all the political parties, and all the principal papers of the world—outside the United States.

If one reads in his paper that Chancellor Seipel of Austria has made an important pronouncement and that his policy is strongly supported by the Vienna Reichspost, one need no longer conclude that this means an endorsement by the Austrian press. The Handbook informs us that the Reichspost is an organ of Seipel's party and the mouthpiece of Seipel himself. Likewise in a thousand other combinations—which the Handbook clarifies.

It will be vastly useful, not only to journalists and editors, but to any citizen who desires to understand what is going on in the larger world into which America has moved.

The real value of this volume, however, consists in the numerous papers prepared in advance by experts, provided for the information of the members, and in the lists of questions proposed for debate in the "Round Tables," with summaries of the views of the different speakers. Many of these are useful for reference, especially the monographs on the population and food supply of Japan, those on the population, agriculture, and industries of China, and the explanation of the working of the immigration laws of Australia, where undesirables are excluded by dictation tests in Gaelic, and classical Greek, with Amharic as a last resort. Though some of the papers might be called *ex-parte* statements, others are of unusual importance, like those which relate to the future of foreign missions in China. The editing and preparation of the material are admirable, and it is to be regretted that some of the facts have not been presented in current periodicals in more popular form.

THE PROTECTION OF MINORITIES. By *L. P. Mair.* London: Christopher's.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES. By *Bertha Moses Haines* and *Charles Grover Haines.* Crofts. $2.

UNEMPLOYMENT OR WAR. By *Maurice Colbourne.* Coward-McCann. $3.

History

THE ROMAN LEGIONS. By *H. M. D. Parker.* Oxford University Press. $5.

MACEDONIAN IMPERIALISM. By *Pierre Jouguet.* Knopf. $6.50.

ENGLAND FROM CHAUCER TO CAXTON. By *H. S. Bennett.* Harcourt, Brace. $2.

ENGLAND IN JOHNSON'S DAY. By *M. Dorothy George.* Harcourt, Brace. $2.

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HISTORY OF ENGLAND. By *W. E. Lunt.* Harpers. $5.

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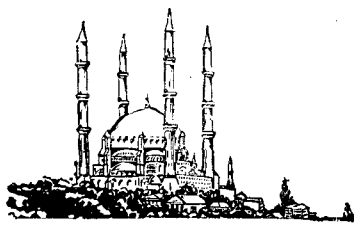

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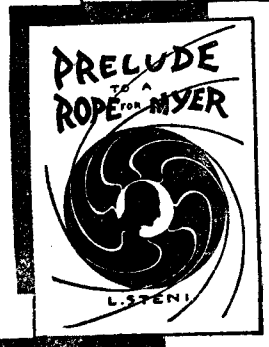

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